

Elsinore

Copenhagen

Kallundborg Roskilde

Samsø

Aarhus

Great
Belt

Jellinge

Ribe

Dane
Work

Aide-de-Camp's Library



Rashtrapati Bhavan
New Delhi

Accn. No. 511

Call No. IX (C) - B

RETURN TO THE BALTIC



EL SINORE July 1938

RETURN TO THE BALTIC

By

HILAIRE BELLOC

Illustrated by

EDMOND L. WARRE

CONSTABLE & CO LTD LONDON

PUBLISHED BY
Constable and Company Ltd.
LONDON

*The Macmillan Company
of Canada, Limited*
TORONTO

FIRST PUBLISHED 1938

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY THE WHITEFRIARS PRESS LTD.
LONDON AND TONBRIDGE

•

Dedication

To Poor Old Woden

*“And so the Truth comes round by lies again
How men make gods, gods women, women men”*

(Motto to be set up on the tomb of Woden, whenever it shall be identified; and whenever it is it will be somewhere near Upsala.)

CONTENTS

		PAGE
JELLING . . . . .	.	3
THE BOATS . . . . .	.	22
THE ICE . . . . .	.	27
ELSINORE . . . . .	.	31
THE SOUND . . . . .	.	43
RIBE . . . . .	.	47
AARHUS . . . . .	.	52
ROSKILDE . . . . .	.	63
COPENHAGEN . . . . .	.	71
STOCKHOLM . . . . .	.	77
THE VASA . . . . .	.	82
SWEDEN AND ENGLAND . . . . .	.	88
UPSALA . . . . .	.	98
THE STATUES . . . . .	.	116
ARCHITECTURE . . . . .	.	118
FOREST . . . . .	.	121
JONKOPPING . . . . .	.	125
WATER POWER . . . . .	.	126
THE GREAT LAKES . . . . .	.	128
NO CASTLES . . . . .	.	130

CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE CANAL	132
VADSTENA	134
POLAND	145
DANTZIG	148
CRACOW	158
THORN	163
WARSAW	169
PRUSSIA	177
GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS	179
ICONOCLASTS	183
GOTHENBURG	185

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

ELSINORE	<i>frontispiece</i>	FACING PAGE
THE OLD CHURCH OF JELLING		4
THE DRAGON STONE OF JELLING		13
THE CASTLE OF ELSINORE		32
RIBE: THE MAIN STREET		48
THE FOUNTAINS AND OLD CHURCH OF RIBE		50
AARHUS CATHEDRAL		56
ROSKILDE: THE APSE		63
ROSKILDE: THE PALACE BRIDGE		64
ROSKILDE HARBOUR		69
COPENHAGEN: THE DRAGON TOWER		73
COPENHAGEN: THE BULL		74
STOCKHOLM: THE SUN SINGER		80
STOCKHOLM: GUSTAVUS VASA		83
STOCKHOLM: THE NEW TOWN HALL		84
STOCKHOLM: THE PARLIAMENT GATE		86
STOCKHOLM: THE MOLAR		92
STOCKHOLM: THE RIDDERHOLM		96
STOCKHOLM: THE QUAY		98
UPSALA: THE GOLDEN PULPIT		114

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	FACING PAGE
THE GREAT LAKE. THE WETTER	125
JONKOPPING	130
THE CANAL	133
VADSTENA CASTLE: THE TOWER	134
VADSTENA CASTLE	138
VADSTENA	142
THE STEGEBORG	144
DANTZIG: TOWN HALL	149
DANTZIG: THE ARSENAL	152
DANTZIG: THE STOCKTURM	154
THE GATE OF ST. FLORIAN, CRACOW	156
CRACOW: THE WAVEL	159
THE CHURCH OF THE WAVEL	161
THORN FROM THE VISTULA	164
COPERNICUS	166
CZENSTOHOWA	170
WARSAW: SIGISMUND VASA, THE CROSS AND THE SWORD	174

RETURN TO THE BALTIC

WHEN I was a lad—I had not yet left school—I was taken to see at the Savoy Gilbert and Sullivan's *Mikado*, then young like myself and even younger than I.

I heard the operetta from a certain place in the front row of the dress circle a little to the left of the middle. The impression it made on me was very vivid ; I retained a permanent and lively memory of the occasion, nor was that impression blurred by repetition, for I never saw the thing again on the stage during the rest of a long life.

Not long ago I saw a notice that *The Mikado* was to be played at the Savoy and a fancy took me to book exactly the same place, as far as possible, in the new theatre, and see what difference a space of fifty years would make in *The Mikado's* effect on my mind.

I am not sure that such an experiment was moral. We are not intended to measure our mortality, and to plan a contrast of this kind

RETURN TO THE BALTIC

deliberately is a mechanised and artificial way of treating life ; for life should rather be taken as it comes, and lived in continuity, remaining all the while identical with itself. But the curiosity of testing Time was too strong for me, so I acted as I have said. I booked my place many days ahead so as to make sure of it, and on the appointed evening I sat there, gauging the years—nearly fifty years—between youth and age, observing what the interval had done to me.

The notes or jottings I am beginning here about Scandinavia come of a similar experiment. Forty-three years ago, in the year 1895, I set out with a companion for Scandinavia—Sweden and back by Denmark—not Norway—a brief but intense experience vividly remembered. ‘Why’ (said I to myself) ‘should I not test that gap, leap the forty-three years between youth and age, and bring the one against the other in comparison ?’

I had not seen Denmark or Sweden again in all that long interval, a working lifetime. They would have changed, but I much more ; and it would be fascinating to explore the change. . . . What happened was by no means a peregrination ; it was rather a glimpse : Copenhagen again, Stockholm again, Elsinore again, Gothenburg again, the vast lakes and the innumerable pines, the unending forest of the Gothlands and the Danish Islands and their farms after forty-

J E L L I N G

three years. And in that sharp glimpse much more than the things immediate to the eye (and more even than the people) concerned me, for they provoked in me, as travel always does, other thoughts, and other memories, and other speculations in a train of reflection and feeling, so that the whole little business when written down became a hotch-potch which the reader, if he will bear with it, must take or leave according to his mood.

§

He that would concern himself with the Danes must begin with Jelling, in Jutland, whence their story springs.

With every people of Europe outside the old limits of the Roman Empire there is a moment of origin to be discerned, a moment in which it passed out of the formless mist of barbaric paganism into the fixed culture of Christendom : a moment in which there came to it for the first time in sufficient strength the formative institutions of our civilisation, writing and record, the monastic centres, permanent building, and also, and above all, the kernel of the whole affair, the Mass.

When they are thus transformed they become communities strengthened by organisation : they are already polities : they are prepared to

RETURN TO THE BALTIC

become, later, one of those provinces of our race which are called the European Nations.

That moment came late for Denmark. Charlemagne had been dead more than a hundred years ; his bishoprics and his garrisons, framing and holding the outer Germanies, confirming the work of the high and later missionaries, expanding Rome and her civilisation, had been established for two lifetimes not only north of the Danube but beyond the Rhine and up to the northern sea—when there died Gorm the Old, that chief pirate raider who first felt the new tide from the south and therefore first ruled over one state ; the state that was to be Denmark : and it was from Jelling that he ruled, hating and hoping to stem the coming of Rome and the Christ, issuing his dooms from some wooden or wattled Hall in little Jelling, with his queen Thyra at his side. Under him Denmark begins.

Now what is Denmark ?

Denmark is an archipelago, a mass of islands set on a submerged shelf in a very shallow sea and stretching eastward from a horn or projection of the mainland which sticks out northward from the flat plain of the Germanies and is called 'Jutland.' It is as a group of islands that you must understand Denmark, yet do these islands make one thing, which thing was first made one from Jelling. Therefore did I long to find Jelling, of which I had heard so often and stand



THE OLD CHURCH OF JELLING

J E L L I N G

where had stood at the beginning Gorm the Old.

There are two larger islands east of the abrupt projection also another lesser one to the north over a narrow drift of water ; another lesser one to the south over another strait, half a dozen lesser still and innumerable islets all using as their communication each with the rest this shallow sea, its long bays and many havens sheltered by turns of the strand. They lived and moved by boats and sails. The inlets and short rivers were their roads. Their little groups of rough low dwellings stood for the most part on the shores and all looked eastward to where, beyond a long creek or narrows, another mainland stretches northward for ever, Scania and the Gothic lands and the lakes and pine forests of the northern Suevi, whence it has to-day the common name of Sweden.

So neighbouring, so almost touching the special Danish thing, yet is the Swedish land a separate land with a separate story ; though ruled at times and for long times from the Danish throne, it is another place. The tongues are similar yet distinct. Denmark is itself and now has been so for a thousand years.

§

I came to Jelling by a stormy day, grey clouds driving low down near earth with gusts of rain,

and I saw beneath them the two large mounds which mark the burial places of Gorm the Old and his queen Thyra, Father and Mother of the Danes.

You know how our fathers everywhere loved to mark the glory of fallen or dead heroes with great heaps of earth.

So it was with Hector :—

“Ος διγ’ αμφίεπον τάφον Ἐκτόρος ἵπποδάμοιο

Even we lesser ones put up small mounds called graves that the living, stumbling over them, may respect our memories. A poet has well put it in an Epitaph that should be famous :—

‘ Traveller, pass on, nor waste your worthless time
 In lying eulogy and far worse rhyme.
 For, what I am, this mound of earth assures,
 And what I was is no affair of yours.’

But the enormous mounds of Jelling are very much my affair for their magnitude worthily fixes the standing Names, the vast but dim shades, of Gorm the Old and Thyra. So by the main western road in Wiltshire on the way to Devizes men long ago tried to cheat mortality by the raising of burial mounds. Some old battlefield there is strewn with these heaps for miles and above them presides the greatest of all, Silbury Hill, monument to what great name of what high leader? He would be remembered for ever, and his warriors heaped up that mountain so

J E L L I N G

that his name should endure unceasingly and challenge death.

For that is the purport of such things. It is the immortal soul of man challenging mortality. Yet is that name quite forgotten and even the meaning of those wars. The work remains.

But Gorm and Thyra at least are remembered. Their mighty twin memorials seem the greater for lifting up on either side of the little church which was set between them and the earliest walls of which belong to the first Christian temple of the Danes : Gorm, as is fitting, on the right, Thyra on the left, and for 500 years the Mass which he defied and which she secretly favoured was sung between them : but to-day no more.

§

Gorm and Thyra had a son—Harald—one of the numberless Haralds. For your barbarian is not a multiple fellow and having got one thing into his head there is little room for another. But this Harald remains in the memory even of our schooldays because he was nicknamed Bluetooth. He first admitted—late and for policy—the agents of civilisation, the priests of Christ and their divine liturgy.

But the thing went sluggishly. There is a discipline about civilisation which irks your barbarian as lessons irk a raw lad or company

manners a yokel. Dickens has hit it in one good phrase about the boy who said of learning the alphabet, 'Going through so much to acquire so little !' Hence the kick against enlightenment. Everywhere—even in Ireland at first (though Ireland was manifestly predestined)—the coming of right living, of the Mass and all that goes with the Mass, of permanent building and a literature, was for a moment resisted : but after all, Tara came centuries before Jelling.

This Harald, then, did receive the missionaries sent him and reason filtered in through the neck of the Danish Chersonese.

It filtered slowly and with setbacks. Harald's own son, Svend, who harried England, was fiercely in opposition to the Church and civilisation, and if Harald himself did not withstand the new things in his age, yet he was moved as much by policy as by anything else : for he was a sly savage and needed support against those whom he opposed. It was not till Svend's son, Canute, the midget Canute, was acclaimed by the Danish soldiery which still camped in England that things really began to move.

For there was greatness in Canute even though he did bear the brutish name of Knud until it was softened and tamed into pronounceable form : but, then, his mother was a Slav and men inherit from their mothers. Canute in the days when the light was spreading, in the early eleventh, the

dawn of the Middle Ages, venerated Rome. Such a mood gave him power, and he was recognised all over the North—attempting a shadowy general realm, to include England with the Baltic. The crazy fabric crumbled just after his death for his successors were worthless and early died.

The framework of Denmark was formed. There were Bishops at last, in Ribe and in Sleswig, nearest to the Empire; though the Islanders, the Danes, mistrusted the Empire which stood for constructive order and might cut short their piracies and dry up the stream of loot—the gold and silver which the raiders brought back from happier places.

From the beginning the crews of Danish Islanders, the Pirates, had hoped to stave off Europe: at least as early as Gorm and Thyra, perhaps earlier, they had attempted to defend themselves permanently against the South, its laws and justice.

There is a narrows in the neck of the Danish Chersonese, the gate of approach from the south. There two waterways from the east and the west of the peninsula nearly meet, and in the gap of dry land between, which was a gate of invasion for the Imperial armies, they had set up the 'Dane work,' a fortified line. In due time the Emperors destroyed it, but they never really mastered the Islanders nor their Jutland mainland

beyond the dyke, though they had behind them all the tradition of Charlemagne and his Gallic and Roman forces. These had baptised the Saxons by force—using for this the Elbe water. Hamburg had arisen. The northern Germans were already half civilised—but the Danes were not overrun nor pacified nor fully of the Faith for a hundred years and more ; the twin mounds of Jelling stood guardian of the Pagan past.

§

That mighty dyke, the Danework, of Thyra's making was wrecked long ago, but the marks and relics of it remain and though now in Prussian hands it stands a symbol of Danish independence.

The most obvious apparent frontier for the Danes to hold against pressure from the south would have been the line of the Eider River carried on to-day by the eastern waterway to Kiel. It is the line of what is to-day the Kiel Canal. But though that line is the most obvious demarcation, it is not the easiest to hold. The easiest to hold was and is the trace in the narrow gap of dry land just north of the canal, and that was seen right back in the Dark Ages when the new civilised Catholic body of northern Germans had first been formed, pressing upon the pagan Danes.

There then, across the gap, the Danes put up their earthwork with its strong-points at regular intervals (called 'towers,' being, I suppose, at first wooden blockhouses); and what they did was called by the Germans 'the Danework' and its remains are called so still.

The trace, I have said, skilfully took advantage of the narrowest bit of dry land between the Baltic and the North Sea, which is between the waters of the Eckenfjord and the marshes of the Treene River. The water of the Eckenfjord coming right into the land from the Baltic, is continued in the mere called Westerbrunge for some miles further inland. From the head of that little mere, if you go up a local stream westward by a little south, you come in one day's easy marching, not much more than ten miles, to the swamps of the Treene. So restricted a narrow could be held; and the work was of such skill that you may see its broken relics to-day, just as you may see the huge relics of the Wansdyke in Wiltshire.

But there is this difference between the Dane-work and our dykes in this country, Wansdyke, Offa's Dyke, and the rest, our dykes were not, and could not have been raised mainly for defence; they must have been intended mainly for demarcation, though capable of use for defence at any one sector with sufficient warning of a raid. You cannot man, under primitive

conditions, a line scores of miles long. If our English dykes were not for demarcation they may have had some other lost purpose—perhaps religious—but the Danework was clearly made for defence and nothing else. Note how the town of Slesvig stands just north of that rampart and barrier. That Slesvig should have fallen to the pressure from the south is characteristic of what happened in those lands with the growth of such pressure.

It is a thing to muse on, the ebb and flow of the pressure upon the Danes from the south, and an ironic aspect of it is the reversal of the *rôles* in our own time. When the pressure from the South began, and the resistance to it began, when that very ancient Danework was first shovelled up and arose along those few miles, it was a barrier to keep civilisation away from roving, unsettled men who wanted none of it and who used their freedom for piracy. The Danework arose to check the coming of our religion and all that our religion brought with it. It arose against those who claimed in a lesser fashion the traditions of Rome, those who even bore the most exalted title of 'Imperator'; those who adopted in a warped way the awful name of Cæsar. But to-day if there were a Danework, if there were a Maginot line for Denmark, it would be just the other way. That happy little state, amenable, full of beauty in



THE DRAGON STONE OF JELLING.

To face page 13

J E L L I N G

stone and bronze and letters and all the tradition of Europe, would depend upon that line to-day to keep out a new barbarism to the south of them worse than the old. For, to the south of Denmark to-day stands Prussia.

§

On one of these mounds at Jelling—his mother's I think, Thyra's, but it may have been his father's—Harald had set up a big stone to tell posterity what it was all about and to perpetuate the great names of Gorm the Old and Thyra his Woman. The stone was taken away to Copenhagen I believe and may there be seen by the curious of whom, alas, I am not one.

There is also another stone in Jelling just outside the church, between the two great mounds, and that one is all covered over with intricate chiselled work standing for a dragon and a serpent, though what it means I cannot tell. It is full of go. The dragon is evidently master of the affair, as dragons were until they met St. George, who almost finished them: but not altogether, for less than 300 years ago one of them came out of his hole in Sussex near Faygate and was seen by many. I hope he will come again, for the place is getting suburban and a dragon or two would do it good.

The stone which Harald put up to perpetuate

his father's name (and I wish that someone had done that for the great mound at Silbury) was inscribed with that kind of barbaric writing called runes. These runes are very interesting, because they were a first attempt at writing and keeping record long before the coming of civilisation—perhaps a thousand years before—for learned men (who are rarely to be trusted) will have it that the earliest runes are of the first century. That lettering came, like everything else of advantage to the barbarians, from the South. The runes were rough imitations of the Greek letters, for the Greek merchants or their agents came up, perhaps by the sluggish rivers, from the Black Sea to the Baltic across the great plains. But indeed of all this we know very little, we only know that the runes were there and that, oddly enough, they are peculiar to the Scandinavians. They are found in North England and in the Isle of Man as well as up in the Baltic Lands, wherever the ships sailed from the North in quest of plunder.

And who shall explain why there came, so late in the story of Europe, that outburst of robbers driving oversea? Some may have landed in America. A group certainly did land and took root in Iceland, and meanwhile, as everybody knows, the Danish pirates nosed into the harbours of England and of France and of Ireland and perhaps beached their boats where there was

opportunity and a haven was lacking. It began quite early, as soon as the shore dwellers had learnt some rough arts and the use of certain instruments from the Empire to the South of them and so at last could build proper boats.

These were not large as we reckon such things to-day. Quite late in the business eighty men was a most exceptional crew, even fifty men was more than the average. That is how we know that the total number of raiders anywhere must have been quite small. But they had a great effect upon a society already disassociated and decayed. Wherever they landed on Christian land one may suppose broken men would join them and they would carry away slaves as well as loot, for of slaves was the bulk of Christendom then still made up. We have only one document with figures to help us guess at the proportion of slaves to freemen in Northern Christendom 1,000 years ago. That document is alluded to as a grant of land to St. Wilfred for his conversion of Sussex between Chichester and the sea, and there the slaves on the land were two-thirds of the people.

The knowledge of shipbuilding coming in from the South crept up the Frisian coast and there was plenty of piracy from the third century onwards, and there seem to have been regular small settlements or colonies of the pirates—in Northumbria and the Lowlands of Scotland, for

RETURN TO THE BALTIC

instance—the chieftains at the established garrisons took over the local government. And though we do not know what happened in all that dark time we do know that on the fringe of Christendom our culture and its religion were obscured and perhaps destroyed. It was necessary to re-introduce the Mass and the Faith into Britain.

All that story of the early raids is a commonplace and has been enormously exaggerated, until people who did not appreciate the small numbers involved got to believe that England was in some way repeopled from across the North Sea, an absurdity so absurd that it makes one blush for human judgment.

Then again we all know how the language changed over a great part of England, probably through the Church Schools and their gradual effect after the Church had plumped for the little Eastern Kinglets of our Island against the Western.

All that, I say, is common property. But why the new outburst hundreds of years later? Why Lindisfarne? Why, after the better part of a lifetime, the appearance of the pirate Danish ships everywhere in the ninth and the tenth centuries?

That is a question no one has answered and probably no one can. All we know is that it happened, and that then, after about 200 years,

J E L L I N G

the storm died down and the raiders were absorbed ; but not before they had stamped names of their own upon Islands and Capes very far away from the Danish bays whence they had sailed. By a nice irony that place in which there were perhaps fewest of them in proportion to the total population has best retained their name, for we still talk of the second Lyonese as 'Normandy.'

One interesting thing happened through these raids—a thing not unlike the currency adventures of our own day. It was the piling up of great masses of gold and silver in Scandinavia which gave it a sort of ephemeral power for a time ; and another thing that happened was the discovery by Scandinavia of wine. The pirates brought it home in lashings and I suppose it did more to make them rational human beings than anything else in their loot. Also there is very good wine in Denmark to this day, and in Sweden ; but more difficult to get at in Sweden.

§

Lord ! How the wind howled round these tombs of Thyra and Gorm the Old ! How the storm clouds raced above them !

It was a southerly gale as you may imagine, and I wish it either always blew from that quarter or was always calm, or half and half, but

never from the north-east or east, for all evil things come to Old England with easterly winds, coughs and colds and other ailments, influenza and a thing called 'Frozen Gizzard' (a very inhibiting disease which atrophies all the pseudo-creative power in mankind and paralyses the Genius or Protecting Spirit whereby books are written, stones carved and songs sung), thence also pushed by the east wind, came to England, the House of Nassau, of which the less said the better, and (I suppose) the Guelphs—who at least had lineage, though no more title to the throne of England than a barber's block; but worst of all it brought the Danish pirates who, few though they were, all but murdered her; rifling her shrines and burning her churches and massacring her priests and torturing and robbing and playing the Apocalypse at large. The great Alfred mastered them—but barely. They came again to destroy and rage till they were thoroughly and finally knocked on the head by Duke William when, being crowned, he was already King William; a square-shouldered, short, bullet-headed man from Falaise (nourished on wine, not ale), where you may see his statue on a prancing horse.

If the winds had always been from the south-west whenever they blew in these parts the pirates could never have got here, for they could not beat up against the weather, and in calms

they had not the determination to row for days on end as did the southern men. I thank God that sometimes their horrible north-easter betrayed them, as in Swanage Bay when he piled up a whole fleet of their ships on to the Dorset shingle and drowned the crews thereof. That was a great day for England ! It was in Swanage Bay their shallow long boats were wrecked and I hope the jolly men of the Chesil Bay who wear earrings in their ears ran up in time, and also from Lulworth, to get their pickings from the wreckage.

But from the north-east and down its wind a good thing has lately come to us ; and that is Norwegian anchovies dressed in bay leaves. Of these no man can have enough.

§

One thing always strikes me most when I come on the barbaric origins of Europe, and that is the rapidity with which the Catholic civilisation established itself when once it had got a start. Here you have for raw material a parcel of savages who can make and do nothing. They cannot build or write or sculpt or paint or calculate. We only know them through the off-scourings of their broken men. Then comes the Church to take them in hand and Lo ! within a century arise courts of justice,

letters and the rest, all on the pattern of the South and the West—that is, of Christendom. They take up administration by local divisions after the Roman Hundred (which they got from Gaul, where you first find it under the Merovingians). They develop true and large kingship in place of little tribal chiefs—they learn all the organisation of our Occident.

For it was this new pressure of the Catholic civilisation from the South which further consolidated the coming Denmark. It was again the eternal story of conflict and peril breeding kingship. There had been any number of little chiefs with their tribal gatherings, as there always are in the early part of the human story. They were called ‘the small kings’ in the later stories which were written down when the Danes had learnt reading and writing, and all the rest of civilisation from the Church. I suppose that each of them, as in Ireland, as in England, vaguely administered about 400 square miles of land, say twenty miles by twenty. That was about the area from which one centre could watch and police a whole countryside. Ten to twelve miles would be a long day’s ride there and back from the chief place to the boundaries; and so their little districts up and down Europe rose on that scale some 400 square miles to each kinglet. But there was probably nothing fixed, there was certainly no great difference between one chief-

JELLING

tain's following and another's. Gorm got them all into some sort of vague allegiance to himself, but whether through the appeal of character or of lineage or of position, or as commonly happens through all three combined, we do not know. Position played some part in this rise of kingship with Jelling for a centre.

I think there was reason for this. The leader in battle, especially when he is leader of a defensive, stands rather towards the frontiers than in the middle of his business. He has to watch the danger point. Now the danger point, once the pressure from the civilised South had begun, once the priests and their Mass and their letters and their buildings, and all that old Gorm and his followers dreaded were on the advance, was the neck of the Danish isthmus. From Jelling one can get to that neck without crossing open water, and one can reach it in a long day's ride. Perhaps that explains the position of Jelling; or perhaps it can be explained in a better way still, a way that explains so many ancient things if we only have the key to the riddle—sanctity.

Anyhow, from Jelling Denmark begins, and therefore to Jelling at once should all men go who want to look down the story of Denmark in perspective. It is not close to any gate by which the traveller from the outside world reaches the Danes. It is within easy distance of the sea-coast

of Denmark, but none of the later powers developed Jelling—it may never have been more than a royal village. To-day it is a village still—and a very pleasant one. Thither did we go from our landing place, and we got there in this afternoon of angry weather, lashing with rain.

In such weather did we come on the great tombs. Their silence and their immensity were enhanced by the noise of the wind.

§

For such pirates to come raiding Christendom there were needed not only north-east winds but boats. Now in the Danish islands and their seas and the Swedish coasts beyond there were already 2,000 years ago a multitude of sailing ships. Mediterranean travellers and merchants had noted this and told the Mediterranean writers of the South from whom we learn of it. There was all these years ago, a swarm of small sailing ships in the end of the Baltic long before they went off raiding. What bred that swarm of boats?

In the guesswork—and fascinating work it is—at the Beginnings of Things there has been made a guess that the use of boats, especially of boats with sails, arose at first in places where there were many islands close together and plenty of shelter in the narrow waterways between. It is likely enough, for one never knows how ‘Things’

THE BOATS

arose in the beginning. Perhaps the best way of understanding the affair is to watch children and to note what they invent, and how, and why.

Anyhow, many islands and narrow seas and shelter did between them hatch there, and there again the egg of seafaring.

So it was, for instance, with the Morbihan, landlocked and with islands. The men of Vannes produced a whole fleet, apparently more seaworthy than any other Gallic boats, and the archipelago of Greece and the deep bays of the mainland to either side gave us early a seafaring people, and the Phoenicians came from islands it is said, though why they wandered over to the Syrian coast I have never understood.

These islands of the Danish archipelago and the sheltered waters all along the Swedish coast and the deep inland-running bays of Norway tended, then, to produce ships that sailed and men that could sail them. Horace, who was right about so many things, was right about the strength of will there must have been in the first man who left shore to try the sea. But what Horace left out, because he never knew it, was the fun which accompanies that terror.

Boys who have had the good luck, as I had, to be allowed to sail alone on the sea long before they were men, know what an unparalleled adventure it is. The first time I ever went out alone, creeping along the coast, I had as much

RETURN TO THE BALTIC

discovery and inward glory as the first fellow who grounded his keel on the beach of the Hesperides.

I suppose the first adventurers did just that. Sailed timidly along a little way, keeping close to land, then daring to go out a little more, and a little more, and always ready to run back the moment it began to blow.

Time came when they first ventured out of sight of land, and then they knew the wonder of the landfall.

I shall never forget the first landfall I ever made : it was Golden Cap in Dorset. I wrote a sonnet to it ; for I was already eighteen. The day was full of thick mist so I lost the land early, a thing I had never meant to do. I turned back from what felt like mid-Channel, but was, I suppose, only quite a few miles out (she was an open boat with a catsail, and there I was alone with her in the midst of the sea). When I could no longer discover England I had, even at that mature age, a mixture of glory and fear. I turned back towards the land, till there came a moment when a sharp light through the clouds showed me the proud head of Golden Cap, well so named.

§

All Denmark being built up of islands and full of straits with sheltered water, was a paradise for

THE BOATS

such beginners, and I think a man to-day understands Denmark best if he travels about it altogether by water. The habits of the Danes make this easy for him; they have vessels of all sorts and sizes, official and unofficial, going from every point of their immensely long coastline to every other point and over to the mainland as well. Let a man take Jelling by walking up from the sea; let him go down the long fjord which cuts off the northern tip of Jutland from the rest; let him sail from Aarhuis past Samso, to the island of the capital; let him explore the Great and the Little Belt, and push the nose of a boat into the narrow, shallow creeks where no one else seems to have gone. Let him, if the weather will allow him, creep down the outer coast, looking in between the islands, until he reaches the Eider. I have not done it, but I think a man who did so would, at the end of his adventures, really know Denmark and be able to write on her story. More than any other country I think Denmark has come out of the sea, a nurturing, homelike sea, shallow and well protected, but the sea all the same; and salt enough (at least, on the northern side) to pass muster with Thetis and her Naiads, though, as we know they are particular about salt and especially so is their queen, who sits throned in the depth of the salt beside her aged father.

But when one thinks of those early boats and

how the thing began, there creeps up another problem which will certainly never be solved and to which I have not seen even a plausible guess. It is this : Why did human things begin so late ? Once again, we know nothing of the beginnings. That is why the opening words of the Bible are so good : they postulate, they affirm, they do not explain. *In principio.*

‘In the beginning,’ take it or leave it. That is the way to introduce a book !

Well, between the beginnings of man and the beginning of his works and pomps, what happened ? We do not know. What we do know is that the things we care about came late. Building and writing, sculpture and the rest, are not to be traced beyond the last few centuries. How many centuries no man can tell, but not very many, and a century is not very much longer than a human life.

If we cannot tell why the other things began so late, least of all can we tell why those boats of the Northern sailors began so late. They must have learnt the art I suppose from the South, as they learnt all arts from the South, but they do not appear in any record except by vague name till 2,000 or 3,000 years, and perhaps more, after the great Empires of the South and East. They talked 2,000 years ago of the multitude of craft on the Scandinavian coast. Why did these craft never go far afield till about 2,000 years ago ?

THE ICE

The first that sailed any distance, the first that we are told of, at least, were a few pirates who crossed the North Sea ; that 1,100 years ago they sacked Lindisfarne. They came perhaps from Jutland, certainly from the flats of the Elbe mouth and the Weser mouth, 'The Angulus,' that is, the Bight when we get our name ; but nothing came from Scandinavia proper till much later. Why so late ?

As for the very beginning of boats in these parts it cannot have been of course till the ice melted, and when that was we do not know (again), but it was probably much later than men used to think. As bold a sentence as was ever written, and an illuminating one, was written in the English language about a lifetime ago, for the English were pioneers in geology. This sentence said that 'Southern Scandinavia was under ice when Babylon and Egypt were in their heyday.' It may be so.

§

When did the ice melt ? It is one of the most fascinating questions in the world ! Being what is called 'a scientific question,' there is no answer to it, and that is part of the fascination. Also, because it is a question of this sort, people will always be exceedingly positive in their answers, that is, the scientists will always be

RETURN TO THE BALTIC

exceedingly positive : at any one time ! and yet they have to change their answers over and over again.

For a long time, during the nineteenth century, the answer given was that the ice age in each hemisphere, the northern and the southern, alternated in a very obvious manner. As long as the summer in the northern hemisphere corresponded with the parts of the earth's orbit when it was nearest the sun, the northern hemisphere was naturally warmer than the southern—then, when the summer in the southern hemisphere gradually corresponded more and more to that part of the earth's orbit, the southern hemisphere got warmer and the northern colder.

If things had always been as they are to-day we could tell how long these periods would be. The ice in the northern hemisphere would melt more and more during the first part of a period of about 10,000 years and the ice would recede more and more till past the middle of that period as the warmth accumulated. Then during the last few thousand years of the 10,000, the accumulated warmth gradually declined, the melting gradually stopped in the north, and in the next 10,000 years it was the turn of the southern hemisphere to go through the same process and for the northern hemisphere to get glaciated again. It was all very neat and convincing until it was knocked on the head by proof that there

THE ICE

had been glaciation in both hemispheres at the same time. We were back where we were before and free to make new guesses and affirm new answers, with the old cocksureness.

I have read somewhere that a sort of clock or measurement was established some time ago by measuring traces of the recession of the ice, or what were taken to be such, on one or more of the Swedish lakes. According to this new answer Scandinavia was all under ice 6,000 years ago or so, and the man who had most to say in favour of the theory would have it that northern Europe was uninhabitable till quite late. The ice was still there, he said, when Egypt and Assyria were in their heyday—it certainly does look as though the big change was fairly recent, and if it was it would account for a good deal. It would account for the north coming so late into history, for the newness of many waterfalls, which have apparently not had time to cut their way back and flatten out the river slope. Niagara is a very good example. If the erosion has been going on at its present pace for many centuries, then we can affirm that it was only a few thousand years since the ice began to melt in northern America. To-morrow there will be some new answer, and after that another answer again. Meanwhile, we can be sure of one thing, that the ice moulded all the landscape of the North and especially scooped out the

lakes of Scandinavia and Finland, and, I suppose, the bays, the shallow bays and the shallow straits which separate the islands which make up Denmark. It must have been a fine sight when the ice began to melt seriously, and probably that came with a bang, for it is pretty clear that Nature works by cataclysms and fits and starts. The old passion for very slow processes, working imperceptibly, was like most convictions (and perhaps all convictions) theological. It was part of contemporary theology that there was no God and people had a sort of a kind of a feeling that if things went very slowly it made the act of creation less necessary than if they went with a bang. This doctrine, like all doctrines, filtered down slowly from the more privileged and leisured to the more unfortunate and humorous masses ; so that nowadays when it has become a mark of unintelligence among the vanguard to talk about natural selection that old nonsense has become a prime doctrine with the millions of the centre and rear. An imaginary brute called the cave man is the familiar certitude of the cinema public and the public press, they have not heard of Cro Magnon and perhaps they never will—and so much for that ! Any way, the Baltic is actually there before us and we can make quite certain of it, and for my part though I love problems, especially the insoluble 'scientific problems,' I love landscape still more.

EL SINORE

Jelling, the earliest historic home of Danish monarchy, is a source, and therefore do I here take it first ; but my memories of a lifetime ago do not cover it, for I did not know Jelling in those days. My most vivid memory of that day attaches rather to Elsinore, and, therefore, having made my obeisance in Jelling and there worshipped the Origins, as is right, to Elsinore will I turn.

§

There are two things about Elsinore, the Narrows and Beauty.

Our fathers naturally instinctively adapted the works of man—that is, their own works—to the earthly place on which those works were raised. It was no very mysterious task, it requires no very special or rare talent. It is a common instinct of mankind and until the modern chaos began, that common instinct worked, as it were, of itself. The heights were crowned with the palaces and strongholds fitting to their outline. On the great plains rose the towers appropriate to their skies : for nowhere does the Tower—among the chief works of man—affirm its mission more strongly than on the great flats, and especially those which approach the sea and invite shipping.

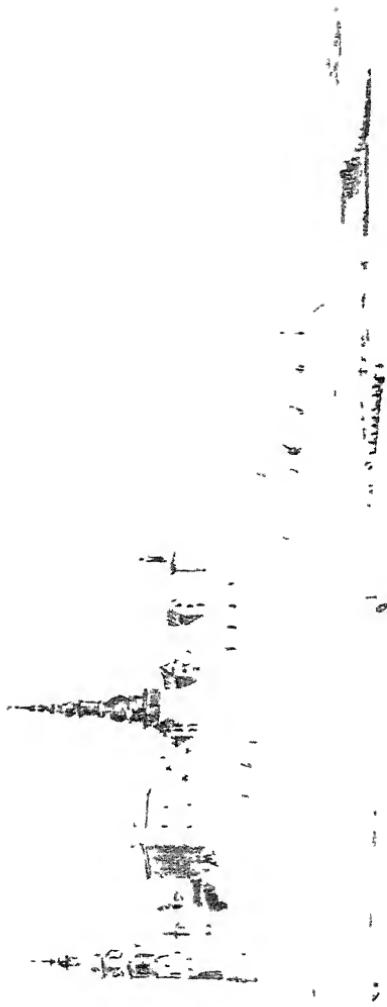
What should *we* to-day make of Elsinore ?

It makes me sick to think of it. Perhaps—most probably—we should put up a jumble of manufacturers, chimneys, blank walls, corrugated iron roofs, and then, amid them, by way of showing the kind of people we were, we should set up some impossible cubic thing or other, stages of flat dead concrete pierced with oblong holes. What our fathers made of Elsinore is there for all the world to see.

The straits, the Narrows of Elsinore, are watched by a turn of land which is hardly a promontory, a point where the shore of Sweden comes nearest to the last of the Danish islands, and where it is in the nature of things that some sentinel should mount guard.

That sentinel is the Castle of Elsinore.

By a happy fate, the building of it came at the moment when the transition from the Middle Ages had given back full freedom to the desire for beauty. Not that our fathers did not find opportunity for beauty everywhere, even in the necessities of sheer defence. I suppose that in the Dark Ages—by which I mean the centuries between the breakdown of the Old Pagan civilisation and the awakening of the twelfth century—they would have made something like the noble, the severe, the silent Castle of Angers : a sort of rock : a thing without eyes, with no apparent entry. That was sheer defence. But even so, how admirably did they express what they



THE CASTLE OF ELSINORE

EL SINORE

had in mind, and how well does Angers Castle marry with the river strand which it defends. Some such thing might have been raised in Elsinore, guarding the waterway through which all the shipping passed from the Baltic to the West.

But the North was not yet awake.

In the thirteenth century they might have made—indeed, they may have made for all I know—something diversified by the new demands of war and the new opportunities for arresting the eye. What they did make in that transition time was the glorious Castle of Elsinore, a very emblem of the change between the old days and the new.

It is certainly a stronghold. It is no less certainly a habitation; and the chief quality of habitation, beauty, clothes it everywhere. No man could desire a better house nor a better symbol of his greatness as a ruler than Elsinore. I think some sketch or model of it should be put up as a warning in every lecture hall where there is danger of the asinine ‘Theory of Function’ being heard, to the confusion of human effort, and to the degradation of building. For you must know that on all sides to-day there has come to maturity and proceeds to the bearing of its evil fruit the silliest perversion that ever distorted and debased Man the Maker. It is the theory that in building beauty depends on function. ‘Let a thing be built to fulfil its function,’ they say,

‘and it will breed beauty of itself.’ Thus a bank is built to house masses of paper which the banker wants to hide from those whom it does not concern. It is even built sometimes to house masses of metal, which the banker is still more desirous of hiding. Therefore the chief function of the bank will be found either in vaults underground or in huge metal boxes securely locked. But a bank also needs a great number of proletarians scribbling away at a bare wage, and such is their function that unless they are vigorously overlooked and unless their irregularities are visited by starvation or prison, the bank would cease to bear its beneficent fruits. Therefore according to ‘functionism’ a bank above ground should all be glass, with a minimum of iron to support the glass, for in this way all that the keepers of accounts perform may be seen through the glass by their masters.

A bank further needs one or two very private rooms indeed where negotiation may take place. These must be quite different from the glazed cells. They must be unapproachable save after due warning, fairly sound-proof—and so on. When the function is fulfilled with precision and without any frills, then you have the functional bank. Oddly enough, it does not breed beauty. The outsides of banks are often beautiful. I do not know if they will long remain so. They are often beautiful to-day because the bankers

hide their profits by giving a free range to the architects, and the architects having among their number not a few who still cherish beauty, they build up a façade which shall attract the passer-by and satisfy the maker's own desire. How long this anomaly, the excellence of the outside of banks, shall continue, no man can tell. As a guess, I should say that we should begin to get banks 'functional,' outside as well as inside, when there is some restriction upon the power they now enjoy of hiding their profits under such externals. Then I presume we shall have the bank showing to the street something which the factory has shown to the street for a hundred years, and something which more and more hotels and newspaper offices are showing to the street to-day: the stuff called modern.

Well, Elsinore came long before all that. It came when Man was free to seek and express beauty. It came when Man understood—or rather, felt—the supreme value of ornament. You see it in the outline, you see it in the manifold detail, you see it in the proportions of Elsinore. In every light, in the dusk or in the full day or by the moon at night, Elsinore satisfies you.

It is odd that such a setting should have been provided for one of the great other works of Mankind, the work, not of Man the Maker in stone, but of Man the Maker in that which is

more enduring than stone—the Word. For Elsinore means Hamlet. Odd, but so it is. Angers means the whole Arthurian cycle, but no one thinks of Angers, that rock-like thing, when they read the translations from the Welsh or the late Mediæval Legends or the *Morte d'Arthur* or what is admirable or what is execrable in the efforts of Alfred Tennyson. No one thinks of Angers when he reads of the great water above which the moon was full, nor of Angers when he reads that Elaine was 'fair, lovable, a lily-maid'—and reading, gnashes his teeth. But all men who hear of Elsinore remember Hamlet.

That also is odd, for the story of Hamlet (I am assured) goes back to the beginning, that is, right into the night, long before these Northerners could write as we write, or keep records in any way save by repetition and memory and a few Runes. The Usurper who was also a poisoner, the revenge of the rightful heir and all the rest of it, was heard, they say, in the days when the South had only just begun to bring the North to life, in the days before rude Paganism was conquered by the Faith.

Now mark here something delightful about Man the Maker when he is at it with the Word. Poet means Maker; and when Man takes to Poetry (or to good Prose for that matter), he brings something into being out of nothing;

a high achievement indeed, that in which he most resembles (after Virtue) his own Maker. So it is that they show you to this day a stagnant ditch wherein Ophelia drowned, though Ophelia never was, and so it is that you may find in London to-day the Old Curiosity Shop of Charles Dickens: yes, there actually present before your eyes, though it all came out of a book.

And Elsinore is responsible—the noise and the sound of it—for another very fine thing in *Letters*: I mean Campbell's *Ode*. When we repeat, as must always be repeated, the prime truth that bad History makes good verse, let us especially remember that glorious line, 'By thy dark and stormy steep, Elsinore!' That man had certainly an ear! Perhaps when he wrote the words he had a vision of some towering cliff hanging like a shield above the deep and awful with thunder clouds. But the real Elsinore is as flat as a pancake. A man swimming in the sea will hardly see it peeping above the disturbing waves. No steep, nor as a rule any storm, nor as a rule any darkness. What is more, Elsinore, your romantic famous shore, only carries that trumpet sound in the form which the English language has given it. Its true name, its native name, is quite different. It is Helsingor, and I defy Shakespeare or Campbell or the sublime Kipling or anybody else to make English splen-

RETURN TO THE BALTIC

dour out of the syllables 'Helsingor.' But 'Elsinore' is as good a bit of sound for English purposes, as good a morsel of meat for English poets, as could be imagined.

§

'By thy dark and stormy Steep, Elsinore !'

Rhetorical? Yes, certainly! And what the devil is the matter with rhetorical verse? More power to its elbow.

§

So much for Elsinore, the word and the beauty of the word, and that lovely building which may God preserve in these days when the last of dying Christendom seems determined on its own destruction.

§

I have said that Elsinore is not only Beauty, but also the Narrows.

Now Sea Narrows are everywhere very important things. No man can understand the history of his race or of the world who does not meditate upon Narrows: the places where opposing shores constrain the passage of ships to a stream commanded, if not by direct fire, by frequent

EL SINORE

sally from either strand. These are the Gates, and they are such that those who hold the gates hold also and challenge the trade and the strategy of the world.

It is strange how few they are. One recalls Gibraltar, the Bosphorus, Bab-el-Mandeb, Singapore and this last one, Elsinore. To hold Gibraltar and the opposing shore was for centuries to hold the gates of the Mediterranean, even when the same Power did not hold both sides, Gibraltar, impregnable under the old conditions, was sufficient. To-day it has lost its function, a truth which angers so many that they will not hear it told. The Bosphorus, which Napoleon called the 'Key of the World,' loses half its value when Russia drops out of civilisation, or when the great wheatfields and the oil can no longer use the Black Sea. It loses half its value when Asia Minor has been broken away from Christendom, and when Syria cannot find its way westward by that gate. The Bab-el-Mandeb is still the gate to India. England held it absolutely until the other day, when, with astonishing improvidence, she allowed Dumeira to slip from her; and now we try to put that right by pretending that Dumeira does not exist and forbidding its name to appear in our public prints—a piece of ostrich work which suits our rivals admirably. As for Singapore, it is so much, so overwhelmingly, the key

RETURN TO THE BALTIC

to the Far East that its possession will certainly be challenged. All come and go of Trade and Men from vast China to the Indian Seas and Europe must pass by the fortifications of that very narrow salt stream.

All this is not true of Elsinore. Elsinore is not on that scale. Nevertheless, Elsinore is the Messina of the North. You are not bound to sail past Elsinore in order to get in or out of the Baltic, you can go round by the Great Belt, but this is the longer way round, and in practice men will nearly always pass under the guns of Elsinore—when it has guns. Elsinore used to levy a toll on all the Baltic shipping, until it was bought out almost in our own time. But Elsinore, like a hundred other human things, keeps up the effigy of its old use ; so that a man sailing by says “What is that guardian stronghold on the Narrows ?” And hearing it is Elsinore, he worships and understands. It was the first place I ever saw of the Denmark of my youth, and I came upon it as it should be come upon, by sea, and how it moved me !

There is at Elsinore a baby harbour, one of the many miniature harbours in the world. They are all delightful, as large-scale models must of their nature be. From that little harbour the steamer takes one across the Narrows to the Swedish bank, and so to new things—but of these I will write when the time comes to say good

EL SINORE

night to Denmark and good morning to Sweden later on.

§

You will understand Elsinore a great deal better if you will regard the Danish archipelago as the bar of the great Baltic River and Jutland as the sandbank which has grown up along one side of that bar.

Jutland is joined to the mainland by that narrow neck of the Danework and the Eider just to the south, but all the rest of Denmark is the archipelago. It is an island group gathered under one Crown and making one people, and an island group of which Jutland itself is almost an island, and has tried to make itself strategically an island by defence against the Empire to the south.

Denmark as the bar or delta of the great Baltic River is not a mere fantasy or parallel. The Baltic is essentially a river. The fresh water which is received from all around is fed by rivers, the catchment areas of which are three or four times the size of the Baltic itself. When the winter snow and ice are melting the Baltic is fresh far down south. I have drunk water from over the side of a ship near the Aaland Islands. How much further on one can still find it only brackish, I do not know, but the Baltic is essentially a great inland river or estuary which makes

its way to the main sea through the maze of the Danish islands.

These islands stand, as I said earlier, in very shallow water. The bank on which Jutland itself stands is covered by no more than a film of ten fathoms: you do not get twenty fathoms for miles and miles west of the Jutland coast, and eastward, in the channels between the islands of the archipelago though there are occasional pockets or holes of as much as twenty fathoms, more like ten is the general rule, and a great deal of that sea is shallower still. The surplus of fresh river water pouring out of the Baltic is checked by the winds. The prevailing winds which blow over the Danish land are the same south-western summer winds which give so much of her character to England, and these coming up the deeper water, which may be regarded as the very mouth of the Baltic River beyond the bar, the broad bit between the north of Jutland and the Gulf of Oslo, forces the water back. Therefore, although the current out of the Baltic is normally northward, past the Danish islands, sometimes it sets, even on the surface, the other way, both under the impulsion of the wind blowing into the Scandinavian gulf from the outer sea and from the height of water piled up by the wind.

This Scandinavian gulf, which makes a broad crooked elbow north of Denmark, is called the Skager Rack, but English sailors have also long

THE SOUND

learnt to call it 'the Sleeve,' just as in the French of the Middle Ages the Channel was called 'the Sleeve'; and the French to-day still retain that name—*la Manche*. The mediæval sleeve got broader towards the wrist: men used it as a pocket; and it is this shape, which is the more striking in this Scandinavian 'Sleeve' than in the Channel one, that adds to the aptitude of the name.

There is no tide to speak of, and within the narrows there is, of course, none at all. Yet under the effects of the wind there will come great differences of level. A lifetime ago there was measured under the stress of a gale as much as ten foot of water above the mean level at the Sound.

Just as in the gates of the Mediterranean there is an outward undercurrent flowing, not only the inflowing current, so in these gates of the Baltic there is a current naturally going south out of the main sea while the general surface current goes north. Sometimes the undercurrent comes near the surface, making a whirlpool in conflict with the top layer of water, and when the south-west wind has piled water up in the Sleeve north of the narrows and sets the current southward against this, you get these whirlpools again. Narrows breed whirlpools: witness Charybdis off the Straits of Messina, though Charybdis is nothing to write home about. A boat pulls out of it

easily to-day. Perhaps she was more formidable in her youth as was her sister *Scylla*.

What between the variation of level and the tricky contrast between a current generally going northward but occasionally southward, the steering out to the open sea through the Danish archipelago is difficult indeed. The passages lie between a mass of sandbanks and shoals, and smaller and larger islands, besides the main islands, and the shape of the shores has made exit more difficult still.

There are three main channels. The first is called the Little Belt, and is the most westerly going along the Jutland shore; the middle one is called the Great Belt; and the eastern one is called the Sound. The Little Belt would not naturally be used by shipping, for it is tortuous, in some places very shallow, and at its narrowest no more than a gut which is dominated from either bank by short range fire.

When you look at the land-map you might imagine that commerce out of and into the Baltic would naturally go by the Great Belt, but there are two very good reasons against its doing so. The first reason is that it is a longer way round than through the Sound. A ship making out of the Baltic for the North Sea and the Channel to the south has an extra 100 sea miles to go if it uses the Great Belt instead of passing up the Sound along the Swedish shore. The

THE SOUND

second reason is that the Great Belt is a nest of shoals and islands and here and there a rock. It is abominably hard navigation. Although you do not see any very conspicuous narrows as you go along it, there *are* two narrows in the middle, immediately under the surface. By Sproo and the lightship off Halskov Head the Korsar Narrows are even more constricted than the Little Belt or the Gate of Elsinore. It is a squeeze.

So one way and another the Baltic traffic has had to use the Sound, and that is why Copenhagen grew up on the Sound and became at last the capital when civilisation developed in the Middle Ages, and that is also the reason why Elsinore, the northern gate of the Sound, was for centuries all-important and may at any moment become all-important again, if in some way the Kiel Canal were blocked. Copenhagen shows how it came to be by its name: it means 'the haven of the merchants.' There was here a long island standing along the main part of the Zealand shore and giving shelter. The water between the island and the Zealand shore was always calm, even in a northerly wind, and therein the shipping crowded. Thereto also came the shortest road across the island from Funen and from Jutland and the mainland.

Elsinore had no commercial meaning, but an all-important strategic meaning, and commanded whatever shipping passed. That noble royal

roof, the Kronberg, was a symbol of the mastery held by the Danish Crown over those seas.

A great good fortune it was of mine to have gone to Denmark in my youth by Elsinore, before seeing any other Danish place, and to have landed under the walls of such a shrine (for it became a shrine in my mind as well as a castle).

But Elsinore is not only the Kronberg : it is also the happy little town lying round its little harbour outside the castle walls. It has not grown since I saw it first, and I hope it never will : it is better as it is. There is no reason why it should grow. There is much more reason why Helsingborg, just opposite, twenty minutes away on the Swedish shore, should grow, for Helsingborg is cursed with coal. But there is nothing industrial about Elsinore to my knowledge—only beauty, immemorial time, and legend ; that is, bad history, and therefore wonderfully good verse. For I am wholly with that excellent Anglo-Saxon from overseas who, having lived in wide places all his life and being advised in London to see *Hamlet*, rose up in the middle of the play from the stalls and looking backwards over the dull faces of the sated public cried, ‘ Doesn’t he pull it off ! ’

That is as true a thing of William Shakespeare as was ever said, and particularly of *Hamlet* ; which, if I had my own way, would be rechristened *Elsinore*.

Also there is good fish in Elsinore : I mean

even better fish than you get elsewhere in Denmark—which is saying a good deal. There is also a bronze statue of the Greek hero (whose name I forget) getting the better of the Hydra which writhes about him with its seven heads and fourteen eyes, for all the world like High Finance seeking what it may devour.

But there, I must not continue on Elsinore, for if I did I should go on for ever. I will go inland again to little Ribe.

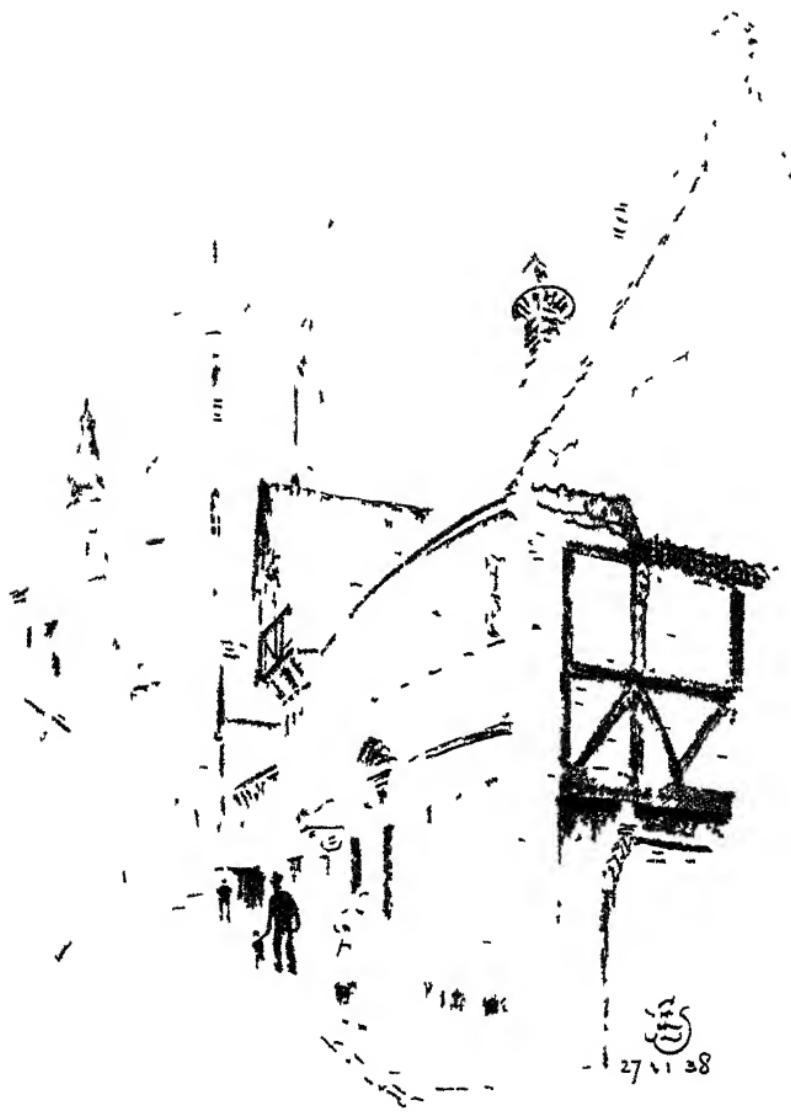
§

No man can know Denmark unless he know Ribe. I had not known it on my first acquaintance with the Danes, all those years ago, and I am indeed glad that I know it now. There is no excuse for missing Ribe. By whichever way you come into Denmark or by whichever way you go out of it, it lies to your hand, whether you go by car or by rail it lies to your hand. And yet, by a very proper privilege it has remained entirely itself, and will, I hope, always so remain, though the word ‘always’ is a word one should never use of mundane things, even in Denmark, even in Ireland. The little countries keep things longer than anybody else, but ‘always’ is not a word for mortals. Remember that when you sign a letter : not ‘always yours,’ but ‘yours for the moment.’

I suppose it is a strong hall-mark of ignorance upon the past and, indeed, of ignorance upon all human kind, when men despise the Little Countries. They alone preserve and they alone are happy, and they alone can be free from pride.

That word 'pride' is one of the most irritating words in the English language, for the English language is vague enough in all conscience, and one never knows what a word means until one knows in what connection it is used. But this word 'pride' is the worst of them. It is used to mean honour, it is used to mean self-respect, and it is used to mean the worst weakness of mankind. It is a pity there are not at least three words to mean these three things in English. For pride, pride the sin, *Superbia*, is not only an abomination but a weakness. It rots individuals and it ruins whole societies. It is defined as putting oneself in the place of God, and that definition, though it sounds violent, is exact. Pride warps the judgment and at last ruins it. I suppose out of ten lost campaigns, seven have been lost through pride ; and when you lose a campaign, you may lose the whole commonwealth.

Anyhow, the Little Countries are free from such pride, and their best towns know nothing of that vice. So it is with Ribe. Ribe is modest, content and wholly itself: stable, enduring, demanding no more than it deserves and receives. I think there is a sort of mystery about Ribe



RIBE THE MAIN STREET

To face page 48

whereby it was preserved from the contamination of Prussia. For when Prussia tried to murder Denmark in our fathers' time, in the 'sixties, Ribe was marked down for annexation ; but it was saved, I know not how, and remained Danish.

After the Great War, in the follies then committed by Wilson and his equally ignorant colleagues, in the raving nonsense of Kant and his League of Nations, they submitted to a public vote that part of Denmark which the Prussians had torn away. The falsehood of such methods any child could have discovered, and its absurdity is best branded by the absurd name given it, of 'Plebiscite' : outlandish rubbish ! The conqueror can pack with new immigrants the land he conquers ; he can train in his enforced schools a new forgetfulness of the past ; those who vote dread the revenge of the greater Power. In fifty ways the issue is a false issue. It is only true in cases where there is a real and permanent feeling. It was true in the Saar, for instance, but it was not true in Schleswig-Holstein.

Anyhow, Ribe was spared that ignominy of Prussian rule. The neighbouring belt to the south gave a majority for reunion, but Ribe had not even to decide. Had it had to do so it would have been unanimous for Denmark.

Ribe is so thoroughly European and Christian that it is still the town of its great church.

Nothing else usurps primacy there. It is a pity that that church has lost its original use, but it is still a church, after all, and the Mother of Ribe. There is a manufactory of sorts not far away, but it does not overwhelm the church. It is rather a modest manufactory, as manufactories go, and makes no effort to be more than it is. Nor does Ribe house discontented, destitute men. It houses citizens and their traditions. Yet is Ribe not one of your accursed playthings, like Nüremberg, or a village in the Cotswolds which, for the honour I bear it, I will not name. Ribe is natural. It is the child of its fathers. And if it ever builds any more, as I suppose it will have to in the nature of things, it will build in continuity with itself.

There are many matters to be remembered about Ribe and to be set down. A mill stream, a little lake with swans on it, a fountain, recalling a Saint whose name I forget—which it is wrong of me to do, because he or she must have counted—but then, the fountain is quite new. If it were old I should not have forgotten the name. Rising above the fountain and the trees, is yet another church, very native to the place. There is also in Ribe, or rather just outside it, the site and emplacement of what was once the castle, to remind one of the part the town played and now is too happy to have to play it any longer. I was at pains to visit that abandoned moat and



THE FOUNTAINS AND OLD CHURCH OF RIBE

To face page 50

26 June 1938

low earthwork, because I believe it to be still inhabited by those who had once been soldiers there.

Ribe is frontier-like: a human place, standing on the edge of the marshy flats. Ribe is a refuge. A wise man might do worse if he had nowhere to die in, than to totter home to Ribe and die there. The Ribecolæ would be kind to him, for they are kind to everyone. I should like to make Ribe a test, sending into exile there all manner of people poisoned by the life of the great cities, their slave-crowds and their pointless fevers. It would be the death by boredom for ninety-nine out of a hundred, but the hundredth would be saved.

I know not whether any famous man has ever been born in Ribe, or has died there, for that matter; but I doubt any such particularity, for if it were so, there would be streams of alien men and women visiting Ribe. As it is there are none such: at least, I saw none, beside myself and my companion. Nor were we so very alien, because after an hour or two of the place we were naturalised. I am a burgess of Ribe *in petto*. Let them know my name, for now I must get back to the sea, to the water, whereby I have said all Denmark should be re-visited and known, and so to Aarhus, the port on the eastern shore over against the greater islands.

I spoke of Aarhus in connection with the seaways of the Danish archipelago ; it is one of the starting points for travel across those waters, and there is one main line which I think most people know who know Denmark at all, the line which takes you by a short cut north of Funen and right into Kalundborg fjord, where the five-towered church looks so young, and is so old : it has had its face lifted. That is, I suppose, it has had its face lifted. I did not go to peer at it too closely.

Aarhus, had it developed slowly, might have been fascinating enough, and the old part still pleases. Unfortunately the curse of industrialism struck it, at its worst, industrial capitalism, industrial mercantile conditions. It has thus had the glory of becoming the second town in Denmark, but not the most Danish. The most Danish things in Denmark are the older things, especially most venerable Jelling and splendid Elsinore : little places.

Ill-apportioned wealth and machinery have not mortally wounded Aarhus ; its people are still happy because, like everything else in Denmark, they are good. But they would be happier if the fields were nearer by. I should like to have met Aarhus first when it was still a homely town, when its great cathedral dominated it altogether.

That church is a very fine building, dignified,

and full of mastery ; and a great landmark for men at sea, and it is full of the sea. Hanging in the nave there is a little model ship, fully rigged, of the seventeenth century ; I will not call it an *ex voto* for I take it that by that time men no longer made votive offerings to the gods. But whoever hung up that little model did well. Wherever men used ships they ought to make little models of ships and if they use these little models in their worship, so much the better. I know a church in Devon on the river of which I suppose no ship of any size ever sailed, but that church was put up by someone who was full of the sea, for he carved little ships all round it. A very pleasing sight. I wonder how many of all the thousands who come across the Atlantic and enter Europe by the bad gate of Havre take the little ferry across to Honfleur ? Not very many, for the last time I was at Honfleur (which was but the other day) I found it much the same as it was when I came there as a child in 1878, with its old church and its honest small seventeenth century quays. Now at Honfleur, if you will go up the hill, past the great trees which have here not been killed by the salt wind but are sheltered, as they often are in Devonshire (where also you get that mixture of forest and sea which is so good), at the top of the hill you will find a tiny chapel to Our Lady, and models of ships, votive offerings, hanging from the roof

within. Query: Will any man ever hang up a little model in tin of an ocean steamer from the roof of the new cathedral of Liverpool now built, or in that other one now building? Perhaps by the time the first such model is ready Liverpool will be no longer a port. The marvel is that it should have lasted so long, with such a bar and such a climate. No wonder Southampton replaced it as a jumping-off place for America.

Marvel also it is that men took so many generations to discover Southampton Water. It is Southampton Water that is now the main terminus of the Atlantic voyage, and there it was, a fine landlocked harbour, shaped like a trident, and clamouring for use, yet unused until the great dock strike of 1889 gave it a chance. Since then, as they say of the millionaires, it has never looked back. But it will have to look to itself, for there is not too much room for monsters in its channel, though they do keep it carefully dredged at the worst part by Calshot.

All this does not tell you much about Aarhus, but really I have little to tell. It is flippant to recall that I found in Aarhus a shop sign, the meaning of which I know not. It may be a trade, it may be a private name: at any rate it is remarkable. Here it is: EAR TICKLER. In one case I found it emphasised. Not only was there written up EAR TICKLER, but BORN EAR TICKLER. Thus a rhymster, *quorum ego*,

might sign himself “Poet at large,” as I did in a little church of North England, or being filled with vanity, secure of inspiration, as uppish as any Milton, he might write upon his shop sign ‘Born Poet,’ which means ‘true poet,’ for they say that poets are born not made.

That, however, is only half a truth, and too great reliance on it has proved the early death of many a poet. For if a man thinks he may trust to inspiration and need not work up his verse he will fail. A poet means a maker first of all, it is only by addition that he becomes a seer, that he is in touch with the immortals, that he is the Mouthpiece of a Message, lives in a garrett, and either starves to death or, more probably, bows under the weight of debt in all the last years before the grave. After the grave if he has become famous, they put him up a monument, which does him about as much good as a sick headache, and how long will it take for him to become famous? Who would have heard of Fitzgerald had it not been for Andrew Lang finding the *Rubaiyat* in a twopenny box of second-hand books? *Vixere fortis* is all very well: but for poets the fame of great men would wilt badly, still more the fame of unworthy little men. But where would the fame of poets be but for patrons, the rich men that have nourished them? Like that admirable fellow in the *Odyssey* whose daughter said to the half-drowned, naked Ulysses,

‘ You will easily recognise my father ; you will find him sitting on an oaken throne, drinking red wine out of a gold cup.’ That is the sort of patron poets need—and this patron was politic—if indeed it was he who produced the *Odyssey*, as I am inclined to believe, though Samuel Butler thought the poem was written by Nausicaa herself. It is all one to me.

§

Aarhus—the ‘ River Dwelling’ I am told it means—has, once again, a taint about it—a thing Denmark, that happiest of northern countries, has been in the main spared : It is tainted with urban Capitalism. More than the capital, by far more than the transport system, Aarhus speaks subtly of the poor enslaved to the rich, ‘ of big business,’ of all the abominable mechanical order under which Christendom may die. I felt in Aarhus a certain figure brooding above the roofs, the figure of the Successful Business Man, which means the rapidly enriched speculator : the inhuman drone or spider who has cut off relations between Man and Man, who draws wealth impersonally and substitutes the State for charity and thinks that the order of Society was arranged to secure his dividends.

There are many things of our day that are novel, repulsive and doomed to a swift decay



AARHUS CATHEDRAL

To face page 56

and a certain not distant end—which doom is the only good about them. One of these is our ‘modern’ architecture. The term is already a reproach and a warning ; but there is another novel repulsive thing which is also doomed, and that is the Successful Speculator. Not the organiser, not the maker, but the Gambler, is a novelty all know who can compare to-day with yesterday, even with the yesterday of only fifty years ago.

Not that sudden wealth is novel, but that the worship of those who acquire it is novel. Men and things are what they are wholly in relation to other men and things, and it is the sudden trickster in millions, he and his relation to us and to the world—to his Creator for that matter—which is an abomination hitherto unknown.

That he is repulsive all know who can taste and smell a character, and all who will think a little will know why : it is because he is a thief by all his motives, necessarily a liar, and after his success fed in his vanity by the base world of our time.

So much is certain. But when I call him ephemeral I may be challenged by many, for we have as yet little experience whereby to test that statement.

In the past great fortunes, accumulated by men who were incapable of making anything and who had no quality but cunning, could at least endure ;

to-day they cannot endure—and that is a consolation. This particular thing the shadow of which now sprawls all over our society will disappear. No doubt it will be replaced by something worse: but at any rate by an evil of another kind.

Now, why is the Successful Business Man in this sense ephemeral? For this reason, that he has no roots in reality. The Successful Business Man of to-day has no talent or quality of his own. He cannot make, and therefore he cannot endure. He is of exactly the same substance and of exactly the same form as the innumerable failures of his own class: indeed, he is often first successful, then a failure and then successful again, and then a failure again, counting at last as a success or failure according to the moment in which he gives up his worthless spirit to judgment.

Of the successful painter, actor, advocate, builder, scientist, this cannot be said; for to succeed in any real and creative activity, even though that activity be misused, demands certain qualities. You may be eminent as a poet although your poetry is rotten; you may be eminent as a painter although your painting makes men of judgment ill and faint, but you could not have been eminent as a bad poet or a bad painter unless you could at least write verse or paint. Something in you has been recognised by your fellow-men, even though their judgment

may be faulty. But your Successful Speculator, by which I mean your man not engaged in real commerce but in the universal gambling of our time, has nothing of the creative about him. When a coin which he tosses comes down heads men speak of his sure instinct and prevision, when it comes down tails they shake their heads and say that they always knew him to be a fraud ; but he is the same man, and it is the same coin whether it comes down heads or tails. He is often called a brigand, but he is nothing half so grand.

§

What ! All this about Aarhus ? What has Aarhus done to you that you should be moved to such anger ? . . . Well, no doubt it was excessive : but still, Aarhus is Capitalism rampant and it is the more favourable because it boasts its capitalist growth in a Society that has fought Capitalism so well. For the Danes beyond all others in Europe except the Irish have restored property, thereby undermining Capitalism.

It shows how cross-sections diversify and complicate political judgments, that the two nations which are now most active and successful in restoring property should be Ireland and Denmark !

If you go by that popular and thoroughly misleading façade—language division—they

belong to two quite separate and even opposing camps. The Irish speak at present, for the most part, the mixed language called modern English, with a large Teutonic element; the Danes a language with a still larger Teutonic element; but the Irish speak a language which has spread among them from others.

Until 100 years ago, or rather more, until the movement of which Daniel O'Connell was the leader, they spoke a language mainly Celtic, or at any rate a good half of them still did so, for it seems that it was the Liberation Movement of the earlier nineteenth century with its great mass-meetings which spread the use of English in Ireland.

If you go by the much more real division of religious culture, the Danes belong wholly to the Protestant culture, and those of the Irish in Ireland, who are chiefly concerned with the restoration of property, belong to the opposing Catholic culture.

If you go by the unimportant (but to-day much exaggerated) categories of skull-measurement, or by colouring of the hair (for modern pedants will be foolish enough even to judge man by that!), the Irish are in the main dark, and the Danes quite abnormally fair. Even if you go by so just a test of difference as political and social history, the Danes have been free from foreign influence and invasion, let alone foreign oppres-

sion, from the beginning of record. The Irish had their land taken from them by force, wholesale—were ruined and at last almost starved out. The Danes have remained through all the development of the old class divisions (slave and noble and free), throughout all the mediæval development of serfage, a continuously maintained agricultural society. The Irish peasantry have had to fight for their lives.

There is no classification from the most fundamental to the most superficial in which you do not find these two peoples attached apparently to opposite poles of condition and experience. Yet here to-day you have them, the two peoples in the whole of Christendom, who are most successfully solving the economic problem of our time : successfully, that is, if you regard the re-establishment of property as success, and the destruction of property as failure. And the Irish and the Danes have, the one of them erected an almost universal peasant proprietorship outside the towns, while the other are far advanced towards the same goal. The one thing you have in common between the two is that they are both comparatively small communities : in everything else, save in this matter of economic freedom, they differ. Such similarity under such contrasted characters and experience is a very strong argument for the thesis that the instinct for property is normal to our race.

Neither, however, has yet completed the business by the establishment of guilds for the non-agricultural activities. Until that is done, the scheme is dangerously incomplete.

Well-divided property, the only alternative to slavery (wage-slavery or, still worse, Communist slavery, or, at last, chattel-slavery, *for it will come to that*), can without much novel organisation be restored in the matter of agriculture. With industrial work it is otherwise, as it is otherwise also in transport work and distribution. *There* the only solution is the Guild. Unless you have chartered guilds outside which no man may hold a shop for this or for that, or undertake mechanical work of this or that sort, for gain, the greater mass of capital will, under competitive conditions, eat up the smaller: the chain store will destroy the shopkeeper; the department store will do the same bad work; the small craftsman will be destroyed, and large machine-work will inevitably drift into becoming supreme—run by a few quasi-monopolist groups of capital, reposing on a proletariat. Now the end of *that* is obviously Communism at first, at last individual slavery: men bought and sold by other men, and compelled to work for the advantage of other men. Of these two, Communism cannot but be an ephemeral stage on the way to that full servitude, that slave state, under which men lived until it was slowly transformed by the coming of our



ROSKILDE THE APSE

To face page 63

R O S K I L D E

religion, and to which in the failure of our religion we seem doomed to return.

§

I am tired of all this thinking—and so are you; let us turn to seeing and being. Let us talk of vision. The heavens opened and I found Roskilde.

Roskilde is one of a lovely company: the company of the little, happy little, kind little, humble little, and therefore noble little, ancient little, glorious little, quiet little, select little, tender little, eternal little, towns.

Would I could add 'secluded' to these adjectives. Would I could add 'remote,' or better still, 'unknown.' I can add them of most others in that heavenly group. I can say of Cherchel in Barbary that it is secluded. I can add of Sewen that it is remote, and I can add of Elizondo that it is unknown. I can add of Salm in the Ardennes gate that it is passed by. But Roskilde, alas! is the last stage on the high road to a capital city, Copenhagen. Petrol has put it but half an hour away from Copenhagen, the chief town of Denmark. Still, Roskilde remains all that I have said. It has gallantly held itself to be itself and has kept its titles and its soul.

It is a dangerous thing to say of any place, town or man, that change shall not destroy them.

RETURN TO THE BALTIC

I said it once of Sussex—and look at Sussex now ! Garages and ghettos. The Devil goes about sniffing for good things to destroy them, and the happy little town moves him to a special fury. He must have heard of Roskilde and he will destroy it if and when he can—but not yet. Roskilde still stands with Cherchel and with Elizondo. If any man would taste of peace in this murdered and murderous age, let him seek Cherchel—then let him seek Roskilde.

The two journeys will be long and tiring, by sea and by land: more than 1,000 miles to Cherchel, thence 1,500 to Roskilde, passing through many States and peoples and tongues on the way, and witnessing innumerable disasters, the crimes and the follies of man. But Roskilde is worth the journey. There shall you find Refreshment, Light and Peace as the motor cycles go hooting and shattering by.

Remember me, Roskilde, for I shall always remember you.

The Sea, Kingship and the Centuries made Roskilde. It held for generations the chief palace of the Danish kings. Its name is made up in part of one such name sunk away below the horizon of time, hardly a man, hardly a memory, a chieftain before the light came to the North, a very eminent savage of the time, on whom a legend grew, older than the oldest records of mankind. He lived so long ago that the tiresome rigmarole



ROSKILDE THE PALACE BRIDGE

To face page 64

R O S K I L D E

of Beowulf, written a little before the Norman Conquest, only knows him as a name.

Alas ! Shameful it is to say that heavenly Roskilde is bound up in the minds of fools with wearisome old Beowulf, of which innocent boys and girls to-day are told that it is the 'earliest monument of the English.' Oh ! God ! Oh ! Montreal ! The schoolmarm got it from the dons and the dons call Beowulf fifth century ! You might as well call Tennyson's *Revenge* sixteenth century.

The fun about Beowulf is that it happened to strike Oxford just at the right moment. It fell into the full orgy of Dons' Nonsense.

It is always fun dealing with lies. It is fun discovering their motive. It is fun examining the liar and in watching his tactics, his bravado, his confusions, his wrigglings.

The lie about Beowulf was the lie that it was a great *English* poem : the first great epic of the *English* : the foundational thing. It was a lie so enormous that its crudity and magnitude alone are pleasing. The motive of the lie was fairly obvious ; it was a multiple motive like the motive for most lies. The main motive was only half a lie. The passion for believing that the English were in some odd way Germans, or failing that, at any rate affiliated to Germany, was not a lying motive. The poor mutts honestly believed it, and undoubtedly we are affiliated to

the Germans. We also are affiliated to Scottish highlanders, to Frenchmen, to Scandinavians, to Bretons, to Irishmen, and still more to the Dutch.

To say that we *are* Germans—that was what the dons said and taught—is monstrous. Underlying this false motive was, of course, religion, the prime mover of mankind, as Lucretius and others have discovered. English people, in the mid-nineteenth century, liked to feel that they were related by blood to people with whom they agreed in other ways, and as your nineteenth-century don, especially at Oxford, agreed in morals and manners with the North Germans and Scandinavians and Danes of his day—or rather with the doctrines from which those manners proceeded—it was pleasing to him to pretend that they and we all made one happy family; and for Prussians our Victorian dons had a special fancy.

As for the manner of the lie, it was this. That there was a fine old epic poem called *Beowulf* written in the night of time, centuries and centuries and centuries ago, before even the English came over in little boats from Germany, killed all the people in Britain and took their place.

Now what was the reality on which this nonsense was embroidered? It was this:—

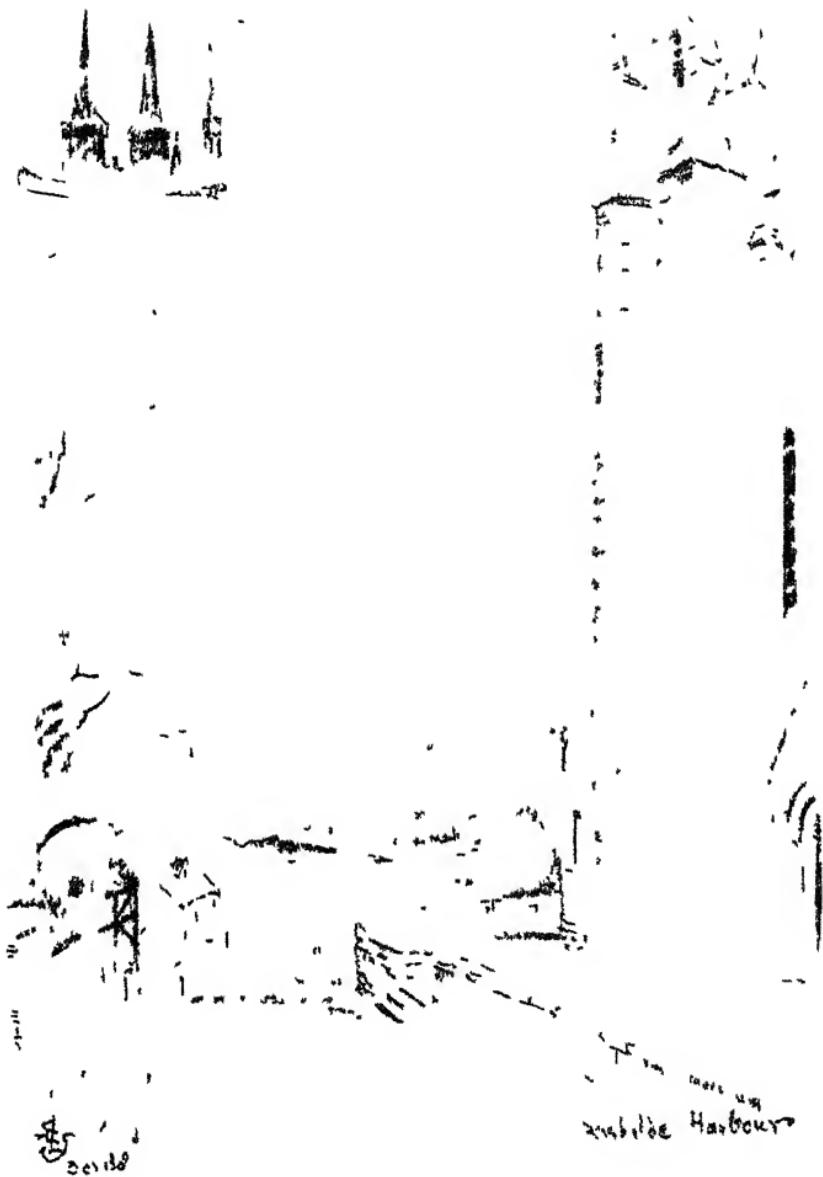
There existed in the collection of manuscripts known as the Cottonian (from the name of the

man who got them together) one manuscript written in an Anglo-Saxon dialect at the very end of the official use of Anglo-Saxon in England, that is, within a lifetime of the Norman Conquest. Of course no one knows who wrote that manuscript. It was the more difficult to understand it properly because certain pages of it were half burnt in a fire which destroyed some of the Cottonian manuscripts, and a learned Dane having copied it out with great care his house and manuscripts were burnt by the English Fleet in 1807 when they bombarded Copenhagen.

Still, we have most of the text remaining, and it is, as anyone can see for himself, an Anglo-Saxon story in the short uncouth lines and turgid manner of the day. It deals with sundry complicated and tiresome adventures between a Scandinavian hero, a Danish king who took him in, and a monster. The monster is the most entertaining part in it, nor is he over-entertaining. There are various allusions in this old poem to memories or traditions older still, just as in Tennyson's ballad of the *Revenge*, an infinitely better poem than *Beowulf* ever was, there are memories and traditions of Elizabethan things 300 years older than Tennyson ; things moreover which Tennyson could never really have understood when he wrote his thoroughly modern, highly patriotic, and exceedingly unhistorical, but superb, piece of verse.

On the strength of those vague allusions and traditions the dons got to work and worried poor old Beowulf as dogs worry a bone. They made up 347,222 explanations, glosses, guesses, affirmations and the rest, about it. Whether there ever was a Beowulf; if so, his date; how the story was written; why it was written; when it was written. All this was chewed and re-chewed and counter-chewed with guess upon guess until no one knew whom he was. But all agreed on one thing; that this Farrago was centuries older than it really was, and that a story all about Danes and Swedes and Monsters was a story about Englishmen.

Some said that the poem dated from the third century, some from the seventh, some from the eighth. They none of them had any proofs, and that was the fun of the game. When anyone brings forward a real piece of proof in the middle of this sort of thing it is thought bad form, a kind of cheating. A game it was, and a game it continued, and for all I know the game may still be played even to this day, yet it is not worth playing. We only know one thing about this poem *Beowulf*: it has nothing to do with English history, and is only an English poem in the sense that it was written certainly in England and in a dialect spoken and written in England a little before the Norman Conquest. *Cetera fumus*: yet so powerful are trick and humbug, self-



ROSKILDE HARBOUR

To face page 69

R O S K I L D E

deception, mere bold affirmation and all forms of mythomania, that Beowulf still has a long life before him, and his ghost still inhabits the neighbourhood of Rosskille.

§

Rosskille arose from its haven. As you stand on the high hill-platform in front of the west end of the Cathedral, with its twin spires, you see below you the southern end of that fjord which runs so deeply into the land and makes a secure land-locked haven safe from all gales, a long calm narrow water ideal for the settlement of early sailors.

When the Faith reached Rosskille centuries and centuries ago, some church was built among the walled huts above the beached boats, and this church was the second centre of the Danes after Jelling. Here the son of Old Gorm was buried, Harold Bluetooth, on the Gospel side of the Altar, and there, I am told, his tomb is marked to this day ; and round him see the kings of Denmark for nearly a thousand years.

The tall twin spires of Rosskille Cathedral and their roof cover that splendid series of the Danish royal tombs. Is there any dynasty in the world, I wonder, which has such continuity ? Nothing of the sort happened in England ; France might be a parallel, for the tombs at St. Denis did cover,

RETURN TO THE BALTIC

as do the Danish tombs, a matter of ten centuries, but Robert the Strong, from whom in direct line all the kings of France descend, was even earlier than Gorm the Old.

It is not only the names of the monarchs and the inscribed dates of the reigns that tell this story, but the monuments wherein you see the advancement and changing taste of men in sculpture from the beginning, after the Conversion, right down to to-day. It is a very fine record; may it continue for centuries more as the symbol of that happy nation, free from ambition and from fear, protected by its modest limits and nourished from the sea. It does a man good, it enlarges him, to feel this unbroken chain of time in the chapels of Roskilde Cathedral.

Just across the narrow water the Swedes have no such thing. The Vasas appear suddenly and late and with no title at all. Hardly do they appear when their line becomes confused and broken; it jumps from one stirp to another and ends with the Bernadottes: Bernadotte, the French soldier of fortune, who betrayed his master. Yet was he not without excuse; Napoleon had wounded him violently by the language of the despatch from Wagram. None the less, I should have felt a little ashamed if I had been among the Swedish officers that third day of Leipzig when Bernadotte appeared upon the field to accomplish the ruin of his emperor.

COPENHAGEN

I hope that Rosskille will grow no larger, and I am fairly sure that it will escape that horrible doom, the doom of *oidema*, or swelling, which has destroyed so many things politically good. For mark this, that Rosskille is too far out from Copenhagen ever to become a suburb, that it has no metals nor mines of any kind. Its lovely fjord does not provide a sufficient harbour for modern days, even if there were enough local commerce to build up a large harbour town. Yet I tremble even for Rosskille, since all good things are watched jealously by the gods below who would make of them a prey.

So much for Rosskille, blessed Rosskille, and so, on to Copenhagen, a day's march away.

§

Copenhagen, being a capital, ought to be less pleasant than it is, but I found it is still the town which I had known all that long time ago, and I think the salt which keeps its savour is that powerful and merry sense of human equality which the Danes have inherited, developed and increased. It does not even kill its own suburbs, and nearly all big towns do ; and then it has an immense advantage of being on the sea. Whatever is on the sea has life.

It glories, of course, as does all Scandinavia, in sculpture, within its museums and outside its

museums, and the richest of its rich men especially endowed it with sculpture. The animals in front of the Town Hall are excellently done, notably the bull struggling with a serpent. It is full of vigour and life and exactitude combined.

I suppose good animal sculpture is a test. Civilisations which have produced good animal figures have a special point. We have not done so, and I am sorry for it. I can remember nothing in the way of animal sculpture at home worth having, except a very good cart-horse carved in pear-wood which was shown at the Academy two or three years ago, also the lion squatting on its haunches, which came I know not whence, but is used as a motive in the neighbourhood of the British Museum; and the other lions outside the Imperial Institute, full of disdain. These last are worth meditating on. There are four of them, and they sneer more thoroughly than I have ever known an animal to sneer. For the rest, animals, which Englishmen love, are things which they do not copy well.

Now this is odd, for in most matters of quite recent art we have done very well; better than our rivals. We have not fallen so far into the eccentric and affected as have our neighbours, and we have had in our portrait sculpture things as good as anything in Europe: but animals, no. It is probably a curse upon us for having made a sort of religion of animals, treating them as



Copenhagen June 20
1938

COPENHAGEN THE DRAGON TOWER

To face page 73

COPENHAGEN

though they were human beings, and that—by the way—has a double edge, for if you treat animals sentimentally and ascribe to them human emotions, why, then you will probably oppress your fellow-men and treat them as though they were beasts.

In architecture Copenhagen did not present anything very remarkable that I could see; but there was this to be noted, that when Copenhagen went in for the grotesque, in an earlier generation, it succeeded, and the great example is the Dragon Tower. The Dragon Tower is a spire on the outer part of which there wind great dragons, their tails mixing together at the point of the spire and finishing it off.

Now, one would have thought that a motive of that kind would have been too grotesque to stand weathering. One would have thought that after a certain lapse of time it would date abominably, as does, for instance, the Sapientia at Rome, or some of our seventeenth-century monstrosities in London. For, all over Europe, in the decay of the Renaissance, grotesque things, or rather, grotesque experiments, were attempted, as they are in our time. Yet the Dragon Tower does not date. It was pleasant when it was made and it is perhaps more pleasant to-day. Why, I know not; unless it be that the man who made it had a sense of rhythm. The curves of those great beasts are harmonious.

One ought not, I suppose, to write a word about Copenhagen without talking of Thorwaldsen. Were I to write a word about him, it would be in praise, in spite of the reaction against him. He was so enormously famous in his own day and just after, that when the reaction came he was called all manner of names and particularly was he called insipid—which very often he is. But he had a fine note of perfection about him all the same. He strove for and achieved exact balance, and that is no small thing. I doubt whether he will rank in the long run among the great European names, but he will always be very high in the second flight. For my part, I prefer Flaxman; also, I think Flaxman more intimately possessed the Greek mind than Thorwaldsen did. However, the reason I am not writing about Thorwaldsen is that I did not see his work whilst in Copenhagen. I have seen it elsewhere; but in Copenhagen where I ought specially to have visited it, I was too much interested in the things in the outside of the town and the business of my travel to go into the building that houses the great Thorwaldsen collection.

It is a pity, I think, that so many people coming from the North to Europe get their impression of Denmark through the capital by which they enter. It is the main gate served by the ferry from Malmo. All central cities



COPENHAGEN THE BULL

To face page 74

COPENHAGEN

form resting places for the birds of passage, but Copenhagen is not so peculiarly Danish as are the lesser towns, in particular those two I have rightly praised—Ribe and Roskilde.

I suppose of all the large towns of Europe the one that is most filled with the national spirit is also the largest of them all ; I mean London. Although London has grown out of all due size and is dying of elephantiasis, it still remains intensely English—especially through the temper of its people. For the English excel in irony, and the populace of London has a shining genius for irony. It is this that cuts them off by an impassable gulf from the other English-speaking people of the United States and of the Dominions, and certainly of Ireland. Yes, the people of London excel in irony ; but, unlike the Irish, they have no wit. However, I would rather have irony in the speech of a populace than any other quality whatever. The appreciation of irony is one of the two main marks of civilisation ; the other being self-criticism, in which we are as wholly lacking as we are perfected in irony. Indeed, self-praise is becoming a positive disease with us. It was bad enough in my youth. It has been growing ever since ; and now you cannot read a public speech, or leading article, or any general comment whatsoever, without the detestable note of self-praise coming in. I have had this bad symptom

explained to me as a consequence of aristocracy. 'Where you have class government,' they tell me, 'you must keep the mass of men contented by every means in your power and the easiest method open to everyone is flattery.' But England was in the hands of a governing class long before this plague of boasting came upon her, and note you, it is not only repellent in morals, but politically dangerous. When a people get to believe that they are stronger and better than they are, when they never hear their institutions nor their public men criticised, let alone remodelled, they are already half disarmed before foreign conflict begins.

To such a warning men blinded by flattery will reply that somehow or other they have always succeeded. It is the argument of the man who has begun to drink and who, in just the last stages of his going down, confidently assures you that it does him no harm. It is the argument of the gambler, who tells you that he can continue indefinitely because he has been hitherto fortunate.

And yet there is a compensation, for a habit of universal deeply rooted boasting gets men into the mood where even disasters do not seem disasters, and where some point of vanity can be served under any circumstance whatever. So that if we lost half our population and more than half our foreign tribute, there would still

STOCKHOLM

be people to point out how nobly we came out under the ordeal of poverty.

§

With that conclusion I will pass over the water to Sweden, which (I have heard) is as aristocratic in temper as Denmark is egalitarian.

§

When I get over the narrow sound and into Sweden and come to renew acquaintance with that land the first thing I recall from the memories of so long ago is the way in which Stockholm, right up hours away by train, is, as it were, Sweden itself. Copenhagen is not Denmark. But Stockholm is Sweden. The preponderance of the capital in the one country and its domestic character in the other is one of the main contrasts between these opposed and dissimilar twins.

Stockholm is an opportunity largely wasted because no sense of unity has inspired its development. The site is admirable: deep water for shipping, a group of islands approachable by water; there, within, the country and there the Baltic, without. There is also enough rising land within or close to these islands to give a skyline to the city. But because no one wanted the city to become one thing it has lost a great chance.

RETURN TO THE BALTIC

Stockholm as it is now is three towns. There is the small architectural monumental group, thoroughly successful, the kernel of which is the Royal Palace, and the old House of Assembly of the nobles on the next island close at hand. All that bit of work, covering a very small space, is in tune with the classical spirit which ruled all Europe in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Wherever you get that note you have something permanent, dignified and satisfying.

Spreading outwards beyond the water on the mainland is the modern city proper, or at least one half of it, the other half stretches out also on the mainland, but to the other side of the main stream. Both these 'extra halves,' as it were, of the main city are haphazard: the streets small and unimpressive and narrow. The modern extension as it proceeds is what one might expect, false to a tradition and therefore jarring to anyone of traditional taste. The big blocks of flats, for instance, are just what you get at its worst in Paris to-day. The new Town Hall, of which so much is talked and written, suffers from the same note of modern extravagance. For there is an extravagance of oddity and 'starkness' just as there is an extravagance of overladen ornament. There is certainly no excess of ornament in the new Town Hall of Stockholm, nor in any of these modern

STOCKHOLM

'functional' buildings. Indeed there is no ornament at all. There is nothing to tell you, as you come up the water, that the building on the left with the big tower is the chief building of the town and presumes to be representative of its spirit. As one thinks what beauty might have been set up here, mirrored in that water, this one failure, the new Town Hall, is a tragedy.

So much for what I may call the second half of Stockholm—without majesty or tradition, without so much as an effort at beauty. But there is a third area which properly belongs to Stockholm, which is quite modern and which is admirable, and that is the development of gardens, parks, private houses in their grounds, and, best of all, good statuary, to the East, by the water.

There is here not only a thorough understanding of how to use the full site, but, so far as I could find, no jarring note at all. Everywhere what has been built and planted corresponds to that mass of inland waterways and to the pine forests and to all that is Sweden. I can imagine a merchant having made his fortune and settling in his age on one of those islands or shores of the bays, in one of those new, excellently built, well-proportioned homes and feeling strong, full communion with his country. Not a few of the cities of Europe, especially in the North, have understood this trick of marrying the waterside

RETURN TO THE BALTIC

to the urban area and of setting up a belt or margin of natural and human beauty, but I think Stockholm has done it best of all. There is a drive out through the public land immediately east of the city where the use of sculpture in the right place and of the right kind has enhanced all this effect. That plastic genius in stone and bronze which the Scandinavians discovered in the last two centuries and which they have not yet lost is here successfully made use of. The rare statues, as you come upon them, fit in with the woodland drive, surprise and yet satisfy. It is good work.

§

I think it was in Stockholm that I felt, more than anywhere else, the gap of those forty-three years between my first sight of it as a young man and my present return. For one thing, certain social habits have changed, notably in the way of drinking, which is as good a test as you could have of the spirit of a community. Modern Scandinavia has made many experiments in the control of what its citizens drink. Each of these contrasting, and sometimes half hostile, provinces of Scandinavia, which are also separate kingdoms, has its own laws in this matter and each has had its own problems to solve. The foreigner cannot decide on the solution, and even if he could it would not be his business to offer



161138

161138

STOCKHOLM THE SUN SINGER

To face page 80

STOCKHOLM

any criticism. It is certain that there has had to be control ; it is equally obvious that the control has been of a different kind in Sweden from what it has been in Denmark for instance. But the upshot has been a different set of regulations and consequent difference of social habit from that which I so well remember in my youth. Further, these policies mark a rather sharp division between Sweden and Denmark. In Denmark there is more liberty and more popular life in this matter—but why, I know not.

In the days of Gustavus Adolphus the beer which the Swedes made for themselves and drank at home was a glory to them. Nothing is pleasanter in that great man's correspondence than his vivid recollection of the brew which he had known at home and which he could not get beyond the Baltic during that marvellous episode, the Single Year, in which he very nearly founded a new Protestant German Empire, and did actually strike the old Catholic Empire a blow from which it never recovered. (It lingered on till Bismarck ; after Bismarck it took to its bed ; the other day it died.)

Well, the great Gustavus, though he did so much harm, was at least not a dram drinker : he drank as had his fathers ; an excellent rule of life ; and that is why, by the way, in England a gentleman should drink wine. When the abuse

RETURN TO THE BALTIC

of spirits began to invade the normal use of the immemorial national drink in Sweden I am not learned enough to say, but I suppose it began, like so many other evils, in the later seventeenth century. We know in some detail how in England that plague fell. The new dram drinking was the curse of England, coincident with the Revolution of 1688 and its sequel; coincident, that is, with the disastrous advent of Dutch William and his cronies.

From the new Sweden of the Vasas, centred in Stockholm already, did Gustavus Adolphus go out on his mission of making all the Baltic Swedish.

§

The Baltic ought to be a perfect Mediterranean, and so it would be if it were all of it open all the year round, but it is handicapped by the freezing of its harbours in winter.

When you get across that very narrow bit of water you are in a new land. The change is subtle, but perceptible at once. It is the more perceptible through the similarity of language and the recurrent political connection.

But what has made more difference than anything else has been the contrast in foreign outlook.

Sweden, after the abrupt change of the Refor-



STOCKHOLM GUSTAVUS VASA

To face page 83

mation and the establishment of the new Vasa dynasty, looked outward for conquest, and her new kings were based upon the special conception of divorce from Europe: an idea which is the political core of any active Protestant State. Denmark stood for continuity, and although there had been there also a cutting off from the religion of Europe, the separation was not aggressive. Denmark always tended to the European idea of a State, the Roman imperial inheritance. Denmark instinctively aimed at the making of a Scandinavian unity, and had in the past more than once achieved it. The new Sweden of the Vasas was all for separation and therefore for a local dynasty opposed to Scandinavian unity. At the moment the Vasas stood for a liberation of Sweden from the Crown of Denmark, and that side issue—of far less moment than the religious issue—has in school and text-book, yes, and in popular memory, taken a chief place; so that Gustavus Vasa has become a '*Pater Patriae*'.

But his main work was, like that of his contemporaries elsewhere, a disruption of Christendom. We are enjoying the final fruits of that break-up of Europe to-day.

Moreover, from their origins and from their nature, the Vasas were usurpers and robbers. They had no title. They must consolidate their title by adding to their revenues, and by the

prestige of foreign victory. This was not to the disadvantage of the Swedish name. Wealth and successful foreign adventure are not a disadvantage to a country, and just as that first Gustavus, without thought of right, based himself upon a general loot and the energy of greed, so he favoured the merchants and commercial expansion.

To understand the Vasas you cannot do better than stand and meditate before the statue of the Ancestor standing on the Riddarholm in front of the Upper House, the place of assembly of the rich, in collusion with whom this grabber firmly established his power and their own. It is a statue thoroughly recalling to life its original; Gustavus in armour, bold, holding the staff of command.

Admire the stance! How he thrusts forward his strong leg, how he sweeps his arm, how he bears backward, with insolent strength, the posture of his body! It has about it a superb confidence, a man sure of his future, of his backing by fate, of mastering his opponents.

Men of this sort in history have at least as much cunning as vigour. He had risen, be it remembered, as the leader of a revolt largely popular. The peasants, especially the wealthier farmers, had looked to him for the destruction of those who claimed dues from them—especially the clergy. Here as everywhere in Christendom,



STOCKHOLM THE NEW TOWN HALL

To face page 84

the movement which had appealed to the commons as an emancipation, turned quickly into a new and worse servitude for the masses, the more obscure husbandmen.

They rebelled again but in no general or effectual fashion, and the new parvenus easily got the better of them. The wealth which the Vasa had raped from the Church supplied him with mercenaries, and with that best of powers, stronger than troops, the power to bribe. And he had much more to rely upon, for he had shared the swag with the greater nobles, and even the intermediate landowners. The merchants were with him of course, and as everywhere in that moment some few prominent among the learned—and the Roman centre was very far away. It is no wonder that the work was thoroughly done.

In Denmark men keep to this day many affectionate memorials of the old religion enshrined in their speech. I am told that you may hear the word Mass used in country parts for the Lutheran service, and, like all other Lutherans, the Danes keep something of the old symbolism: more than that there is the atmosphere of memory.

In Sweden it is not so. There is a certain atmosphere of restoration rather than of recollection. You feel it strongly enough under St. Brigitt's roof, but you do not greet there the

RETURN TO THE BALTIC

ghost of the past as you do in some kind under the roof of that Church of Aarhus.

When the deed had been done, the doers dug themselves in, and it is amusing to read on the base of the statue of old Gustavus the epithets of praise. He is the 'Liberator,' he is the 'restorer of religion.' I confess to a sardonic pleasure when I remember that on the point of death he scrawled a few words, bidding his people to maintain the 'gospel'—the common term of the moment for the new economic revolution and the seizure of Church lands.

As you admire that figure, watch also narrowly the face, and study it in the engravings too. See how the eyes are not only determined but observant: prominent: wide apart: watching on either side. Such a face also his grandson of the second usurpation inherited. The great Gustavus Adolphus looked like that: a round determined head, the despair of any don on the lookout for his dolichocephalics: nothing of the horse face about *him*.

If you want a good illumination of what was going on in the mind of the time, a good 'eye-opener,' read the proceedings at the acceptance of Sigismund, the legitimate heir, in so far as usurpers can be called legitimate at all so early in their usurpation.

Gustavus the Great, Gustavus the First, Gustavus the very confident, Gustavus the



STOCKHOLM THE PARLIAMENT GATE

To face page 86

cunning, Gustavus the beginner, the robber, the renewer, and all the rest of it, had 'made good' (as they say of commercial adventurers) in 1523. He had a run of thirty-seven years for his money. He had begun his fighting well under thirty after a boyhood of fine adventure, disguises, escapes, prison, and obscure labour with the common people. He had grasped Stockholm when he was twenty-seven. He lasted on to be sixty-four, the age at which, upon his death bed, he made his final recommendation of pure reformed religion.

Long possession of power in one hand did wonders for the new movement everywhere, and in Sweden it did what was done by the Cecil dynasty in England.

At the back of their minds the leading men still kept a lingering respect for hereditary right and constitutional rule, but their new possessions were too much for them. The eldest son of Gustavus, Eric, was not happy at the loss of religion, and would perhaps have restored the Faith. He was got rid of in eight years.

They put up his brother John, who was the next lawful heir, and John, in his long reign of more than twenty years, hated the religious revolution at heart. It was John's son, Sigismund, who at last provided a test between the love of money and the love of ancestral things. John had been elected King of Poland. His mother was Polish, and Poland had rallied, after hesitation

RETURN TO THE BALTIC

and confusion, to the Faith of which she has ever since been so noble a champion.

When his father died, Sigismund, now the rightful heir of the new Vasa dynasty, was made king. Decency demanded that; but such a coronation endangered the new fortunes, the new rich, just as the coronation of Mary Queen of Scots, had Elizabeth died, would have endangered the same sort of people in England. He was made to promise, of course, that the Church loot should be sacred to its present possessors, but, as in the English parallel, the new rich felt unsafe. When Sigismund tried to claim his own, he was, in the last year of the century, turned out. A younger son of Gustavus, the champion of the new fortunes, a man who would certainly allow the loot of religion to be retained, usurped the throne. It was his son, the second Gustavus, who was called to the throne to continue the usurpation. He inherited that something of madness which lurked in the Vasa blood, and in his case, madness turned into genius. He was that great soldier Gustavus Adolphus, the scourge of Germany, who so nearly did what Bismarck was to do.

§

There is a remarkable parallel between England and Sweden in the matter which is of primary

importance for judging a people and its story : the matter of religious change.

In both countries the main factor was what is called 'economic,' or what may more simply be called greed, for in both countries the violent revolution was effected by a comparatively small group of rich men who had an opportunity of becoming still richer by the loot of the Church. In both countries a section of the Church on its official side had lost the sympathy of the people, for in both countries the higher clerics were themselves corrupted by wealth ; in both countries the mass of the people, especially of the countrysides, naturally desired to keep their old traditions, but in both countries those traditions were only vaguely connected in the public mind with the unity of Christendom and with the distant Papacy.

In both countries there was an effort on the part of the populace to withstand the robbery of endowments which in the past had partly sustained the masses against the rich. In both countries the popular reaction was easily and contemptuously brushed aside. In both countries the ancestral religion was crushed out, and in both countries to-day it appears as something utterly alien, and for that matter, forgotten. It is as difficult for a modern Swede as it is for a modern Englishman to restore in his own mind the mood of his forefathers prior to the Reformation.

But though the similarity is striking it is far from absolute. The great change had in England one principal agent of genius, William Cecil, and it had no one determined, courageous, unscrupulous military leader such as the Swedish Reformation had in the person of Gustavus. The old religion survived in Sweden in exceptional patches as it were, especially in the case of certain conventional institutions, while in England convents and monasteries went at a blow, and the old religion survived rather through a large minority of families and individuals.

The death blow to English Catholicism was not given until the last years of the seventeenth century ; it had been given to Swedish Catholicism more than 100 years before. In both countries the Reformation largely increased trade, benefiting the towns as against the countrysides, and increased the total wealth of the nation while impoverishing the host of small owners. But though there came the beginnings of a proletariat in Sweden through the Reformation, Sweden never became, as England became, mainly proletarian.

But perhaps the most striking difference between the inward development of these two Protestant nations is the presence in the one of a strong Calvinist strain and the absence of it in the other.

English Protestantism had from the beginning

the impression of Calvin upon its more clear-headed and more sincere leaders. There was ultimately a compromise, in which Calvinism failed to make itself openly master, but in which the spirit of Calvinism, though not the form, retained a great measure of power under the name of 'Puritan.' That power is still felt strongly in England to-day and will continue to be so.

Sweden escaped this influence in a large measure. Sweden went Lutheran by the orders of the new rich, but did not go Presbyterian; and there is a real difference between those two kinds of Protestant thought and action. As in the case of England, a rival Catholic society beyond the sea was the foil to the new Protestant society of the nation. In the case of Sweden it was Poland that formed the contrast; in the case of England it was France.

But the Swedes, though they took to arms and fought beyond the seas more than ever the English did during and after the religious struggle, hardly identified their religion with patriotism as the English did. The independence of Sweden looked with jealousy on the claims of the Danish throne rather than on the claims of foreigners. Again, Sweden had no Catholic dependency and irritant, such as England had: Sweden had no Ireland. In both countries the Reformation had an aristocratic effect, producing class government,

but a similar religious change immediately at hand in Denmark acted the other way, and while Sweden retains a strong tradition of class government, Denmark boasts what is perhaps the most egalitarian society in Europe.

§

Stockholm makes use of no height to emphasize its architecture. Stockholm has hills, but uses none for the platform of a temple or a palace.

The nearest thing to such an effect is accidental. It is the rise of land above the main wharf on the north side of the Palace.

But Stockholm is not peculiar in this failure to use a height as an emplacement.

We moderns have, for perhaps the first time in history, lost everywhere the sense of the Emplacement Site. Our fathers had it and all antiquity had it. We have it no more, save in exceptions such as Montmatre, but perhaps we shall recover it as we are beginning to recover other aptitudes and faculties of man which had fallen into oblivion. Look what antiquity did with the Capitol, look what it did with the Acropolis, look what the later Middle Ages made of that rock of St. Michael in the bay between Normandy and Brittany, the Mont St. Michael, which is one of the few places which are the better for having been restored. In spite of the crowds of tourists, everyone ought to see that famous hill.



STOCKHOLM THE MOLAR

To late page 92

Yet in this neighbourhood also destruction has been at work, for on the opposite hill of Avranches the great cathedral wherein A'Becket and Henry met and round which a great part of the story of Normandy turned, that cathedral was destroyed in a cruel fury, and though the emplacement stands, the slope of the hill is there, man's memorial of himself and his religion has gone. The great mass, however, of the site values remain. Perhaps the best of them is, in our country, at Lincoln on its hill.

The castles, of course, are everywhere perfect examples of site value, but there was here no appreciation of majesty or beauty. They owe their site value simply to this, that a castle was of most value on a hill until siege artillery had grown so strong that men had to take to earth.

The finest of all the castles (that I have seen, at least), are those on the Syrian belt which the Crusaders and their Mohammedan imitators built all down the coast and its inland neighbourhood—the magnificent pile of Aleppo and the stone mountain of Kerak in Moab. Then there is that other Kerak to the north ; but the finest of them all for site value is Markab. There a promontory jutting out from the Syrian range dominating and cutting the coast-road and doing all that fortification should do, stands up into the sky. Go and see that, too, when you have time. It furnishes the mind.

RETURN TO THE BALTIC

I have just said that perhaps we shall recover the feeling for a site and begin to use sites properly again. But there is a long way to go. Only the other day the French had occasion to put up a monument on the Pointe de Gave where the Gironde falls into the Atlantic. They desired to commemorate the departure of Lafayette for the American War of Independence and the landing of the first American contingent in Europe during the Great War, both of which took place here at the Pointe de Gave.

The opportunity has been abominably missed by the French. They have set up one of those horrible negations of beauty, those mere geometrical things in which the modern architect delights, wherein he is worse than the iconoclasts. I have read in one of those papers which devote themselves to highbrow praise of folly a panegyric on this abomination, contrasting it with the poor old Statue of Liberty, its opposite number beyond the Atlantic on the American side in New York Harbour, but I say that the poor old Statue of Liberty is enormously to be preferred. It is commonplace (wait till I come to tell you the glories of the commonplace); it is only a woman in a long gown and wearing a spiky crown; it gets its effect only by gigantic scale—but after all it is like the thing which it represents, a clothed human body holding aloft a light. It is mimetic as all art should be, for all art is a

copying of nature. The artist of the New York Liberty tried to be majestic. He failed. It is much better to fail in trying to do your duty than deliberately to do the opposite.

Then also the French have put up as a sort of welcome to the man entering Paris by the river a most horrible thing calling itself 'St. Geneviève.' It is a grotesque parody of a human being ; it is of about thirty calibres, a human being hideously tall and thin and rectangular, a human being inhuman. We must console ourselves by hoping that our posterity will blow this thing up. Though it be done in anger and for the wrong reasons it will be well done. Even if the man of the future—and let us hope the near future—who destroys the so-called St. Geneviève on the Bridge of the Notre Dame in Paris does so from a hatred of religion it will be well done. As the Scandinavian (and I believe also the Scotch) proverb goes : 'If the Devil brought it, it was God sent it.'

But in travel 'Site' has another meaning, which is, 'the place where something happened.'

There is one kind of site the interest in which is really inexcusable, but fascinating all the same : and that is the site by sea : places where great things were done upon the sea. There cannot in the nature of things be any mark of permanence here, you can hardly put up monuments on the salt water and the surface changes with every

RETURN TO THE BALTIC

moment. It has even less continuity and true being than the ephemeral human sort by land, and yet here also by sea do I feel the magic of Places.

When I first sailed in Quiberon Bay (how many years ago) I was full of that battle wherein the ships of Cæsar overcame the Bretons of Vannes, the Veneti, who bore the same name as those other islanders settled on the mudbanks of the Venetian lagoon. Always when I cross the Channel I recall the big Spanish ships anchored in line along that fierce tide which sweeps the lowland coast eastward from Grisnez. So also looking from Plymouth Hoe down southward to the mouth of the Sound one may see creeping round the shoulder of Mount Batten the vast half moon formation of the Spanish convoys labouring up Channel under the west wind and then, when they had passed, the gap opening between them and the land, through that gap the smaller English ships making out into the wind, nimbler and swifter than the big craft which they were to pursue all the way up Channel to the cannonade three days later: the gale under which the Armada swept up the North Sea, failing to land its troops, and so confirmed the Cecils and their transformation of England. It was there at the mouth of Plymouth Sound that the campaign was really decided. For the Spaniards could, had they chosen, have bottled up one-half of the

To face page 96

STOCKHOLM. THE RIDDERHOLM

English ships in Plymouth and so neutralised them, having thus in the Straits of Dover only the other half to meet ; though I am not so sure that even in the event of that diminished battle they could have landed the Tercios, which, had they touched Kentish soil, would have raised a Catholic rebellion everywhere.

As for Elizabeth, there is not much doubt what she would have done, poor woman. She would have accepted the Spaniards, and so would Leicester ; but that would not have been the end of it, for the foreigner would certainly have bungled this affair. It is thoroughly bad history to think of England in July 1588 as rallying round her Queen and defying the hated foreigner. Half England at least still hoped for release ; but because the official history is false, despicably false, one should not fall into the other error nor think it possible that England in the sixteenth century could have accepted foreign rule, however indirect. Even thirty years before, when the great religious change had hardly begun, and when all England took the Mass for granted, Paget was fierce against the interference of Philip of Spain in the domestic affairs of England, when Philip, strongly urged by his father, tried to prevent the prosecution of heresy. He said it would do more harm than good, and hoped the Council would confine itself to the punishment of treason, leaving the ardent little minority of

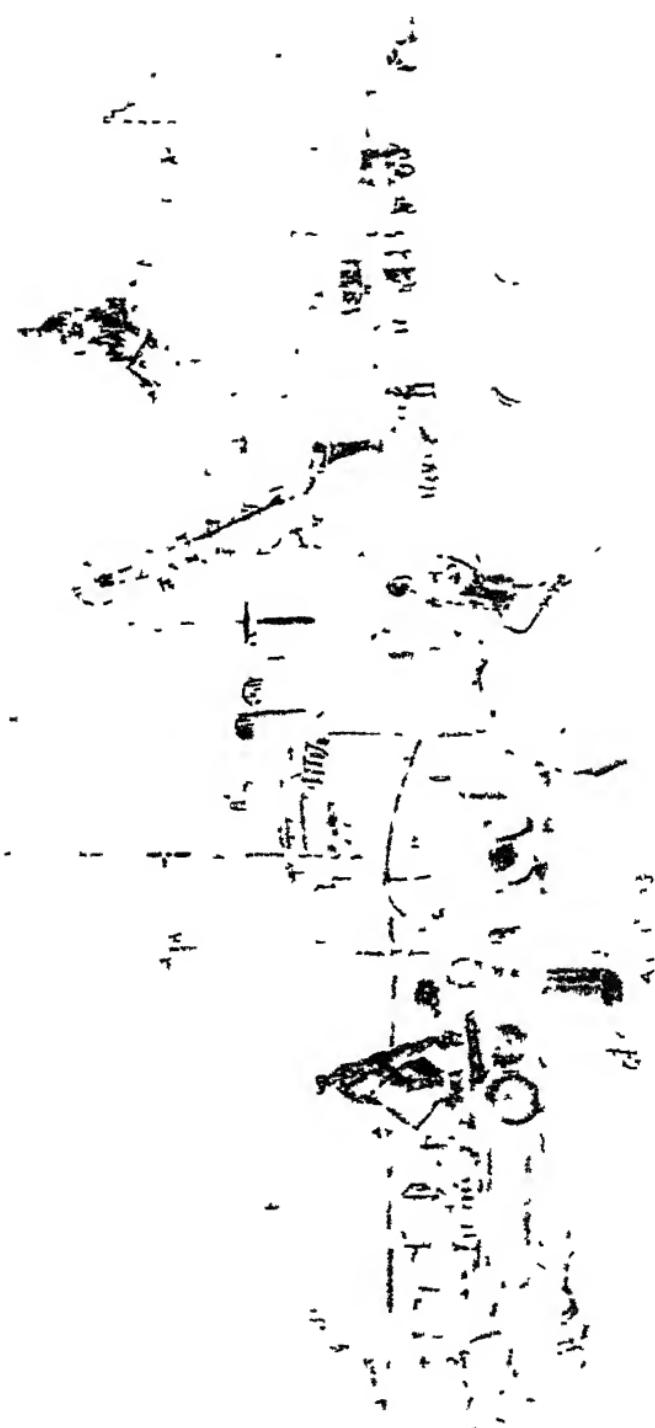
religious dissidents alone. But Paget would have none of that. It was an English affair, to be managed by Englishmen according to their own judgment, and with gusto did those Englishmen demand, with Paget at their head, the suppression of the Calvinist enthusiasts. Would it not have been wiser to support the Emperor's judgment and his son's? Then we should have had no fires at Smithfield!

§

It is one of the difficulties of writing on travel that while half the interest of places is remembering what happened there, each man has read his own amount of history and his own selection thereof so that only a part of what will interest one traveller will interest that one or this one of his readers. But the writer must take his chance and write upon what appeals to *him*.

Thus for me the interest of a site is not only its appeal to the eye and the physical use made of it, but some one or other of the things that have happened there and of the people in the past who acted there and of the history attaching to the appeals one finds there.

Thus at Upsala I particularly felt the appeal of the *Codex Argenteus*; but I suppose to ninety-nine readers out of one hundred so special a point has no meaning. It is most unlikely that even that



STOCKHOLM THE QUAY

small proportion of one's readers should have even heard of the *Codex* and the discussion it has aroused. Before I had read about the *Codex*, Upsala meant nothing to me, save (vaguely) the name of a Northern University and rather more as the original seed plot of Swedish monarchy. Yet to-day after all the reading I have done on that rather recondite subject Upsala means hardly anything else but the *Codex*.

So with battlefields. They interest me passionately when I have read of the action, and the more in proportion as I have read it in detail. When I discovered a few years ago that little fold of land which alone explains Marlborough's tactic at Ramillies and was the cause of his great victory as well as the proof of his eye for terrain, I felt as enthusiastic as a man who has come on a huge nugget of gold. When I had come in by a Crécy side road and looked over Crécy town on to Crécy wood, I saw on my left Edward's army deployed upon the right, the baggage behind it, the great unformed mass of feudal cavalry in the Val aux Clercs, as though they were before me, and I was so conscious of that little mound on which the windmill stood, whence Edward surveyed the battle, that it is not a little mound to me any more, but a windmill actually there, though the real mill has long disappeared. So in the waters of Stockholm I see under the falling dusk the supernatural voyage of that boat which

was guided by the light shining from a severed hand and Marie Antoinette's ring, and in the streets near the Palace I see the mob surging round to murder poor Fersen.

Talking of Fersen, how true it is that history cannot be written by those who do not know men : that is the irremovable obstacle to excellence in academic history. That is why no academic histories talk sense, and hardly any are readable, for what do dons know of men ? The old saying that readable history is false and true history is unreadable is wrong. You can have highly readable true history (for instance, Houssaye on *Waterloo*, or the immortal Napier) ; but it is true that a mass of undigested detail, written without knowledge or relation to how real men feel and behave, what their motives are, history all dates, painfully correct in details and spelling, and absurd in its ideas of human motive, is the worst kind of history conceivable.

§

Upsala, like Rosskille, is the spiritual or traditional capital and centre of its people ; the seed plot of Sweden as is Roskilde of Denmark. Like Roskilde, Upsala inherits the oldest traditions ; like Roskilde it is the crowning place of the kings ; like Roskilde it is close to what became the chief city and administrative capital of the country,

though Upsala is rather further from Stockholm than Roskilde is from Copenhagen : in each case the old capital and the new are within a day's ride. In the one, as in the other, you have the tombs of the kings—but the kings of Denmark were of far more venerable and continuous line than the late upstart and soon extinguished Vasas.

The main difference between Roskilde and Upsala is that Upsala became the seat of a famous university, which remains active and highly productive. Indeed to-day the university is much the chief thing about the little town, and gives it its European importance.

The Library of that university holds one of the most famous things in the world—that *Codex Argenteus*! When first I visited Upsala all those years ago, I had never heard of the *Codex Argenteus* ; when I came back to Upsala this year I could think of nothing else. For in between I had read all that I could within my limited range of language upon this ancient and capital thing.

The *Codex Argenteus* gives in mutilated form an early version of the Gospels in a Germanic tongue. If the date of that manuscript were certain we should have some evidence upon early German ; we should have a solid foundation for the study of Teutonic linguistic origins. Those who are enthusiastic over all things German are and have been equally enthusiastic, of course, for the earliest possible date. The manuscript as we

have it is ascribed to the fifth century and the lost original from which it derives to the fourth. It is affirmed (without proof, of course, for such is the nature of academic affirmations) to be a translation of the Gospels made by the Aryan monk, Ulfilas. It may be so. But there is no proof. The learned Wiener, who knew more about Teutonic etymology than many of his rivals put together, was convinced that the *Codex Argenteus* was Carolingian.

In other words the *Codex* did *not* belong to those centuries in which the old Pagan civilisation was yielding to the new, it was *not* contemporary with the rise of Christian Gaul; it did *not* date from the origins of our culture: it was at least 400 years later. One supposed argument in favour of its very early origin was the form of ornaments in what are called 'arcades,' arch-shaped semi-circles illuminated on the vellum. But Wiener has shown that you find the same thing for generations, and he has proved parallels with the Carolingian time. In the summary of his criticism he says triumphantly that the myth is now exposed and with its fall there crumbles the whole edifice of early Gothic etymology in which the nineteenth century so devoutly believed.

He could not have written a sentence more wounding. It was like the murder of a god, for indeed the *Codex* was worshipped by all those who also worshipped the Teutonic tradition in

this country, and that, of course, included the English, learned and unlearned alike, of the last generation, the contemporaries of Freeman and Green. They were convinced to a man that the English came over from Germany in little boats, killed all the people in England, and then settled on the empty land to be happy ever after. This strange myth was dogma in my youth at Oxford. How much of it remains to-day in that place, I know not, but anyhow the passion for the *Codex Argenteus* went with the story of the English coming over in little boats, killing everybody in England, and complacently taking the place of the extirpated 'Welch.' It went with the passion for Prussia which filled the Oxford of that day and still runs strongly underground in the Oxford of 1938.

When the Prussians went mad the other day and began persecuting the Jews with a surprising thoroughness, I was at the pains of visiting Oxford (a thing I do not often do) in order to watch the spiritual conflict between love of Prussia and loyalty to the Jewish alliance. I discovered with interest that love of Prussia had won. Not that the Prussian persecution of the unfortunate Jews was accepted by Oxford—far from it. Oxford was all for the Jews in that battle, and is so still; but Oxford looked on the episode as a sort of lapse on the part of its Prussian heroes who still retain most of their

RETURN TO THE BALTIC

heroic qualities. Berlin is still a sister, though an erring sister. Berlin is to Oxford to-day much what Rome was to the Puseyites of 100 years ago. Oxford prays secretly for the day when the Prussians will be saved from their anti-Semitism and restored to the old complete sympathy with their ancient cousins.

Yes, that is so. But the Prussians do not look forward to any such day. They admire England but they do not love her. They have not yet any contempt for England, but they are convinced of England's decline. They still regard England as Aryan—which is very good of them. They do not confuse her with the disgusting French, the despicable Italians and the rest. But that strong alliance which bound Berlin to England for more than two lifetimes, though it was not shaken by the Great War, is to-day shaken by two things: the setting up of an absolute monarchy, a despotism—a thing abhorrent to the aristocratic English temper—and this recent attack of Prussia on the Jewish people.

§

The *Codex Argenteus* which is thus leading me astray from my proper purpose in these pages is not shown to the public save in one specimen open page under glass. This I approached and duly venerated, as being, of all the relics I am

prepared to worship, that relic which affects me most.

‘Whatever your date may be, old thing,’ said I to myself, ‘whatever truths or falsehoods have been mixed up with you, you are venerable; indeed you are the Ancient of Days. You have a long white beard. You move me to awe and adoration. You ought not to be where you are; you do not belong to Sweden, you belong to Bohemia. You were stolen by that great soldier, Gustavus Adolphus, you were taken away from your native Prague and set down here amid the forests of the North, with which by this time you are so much associated that many people have forgotten your first home. You are not plumb authentic, but you are very, very old, and you lie at the root of many things.’

I had sworn that I would see with my own eyes before I died the *Codex Argenteus*, and I have fulfilled my vow.

It was not a vow very difficult to fulfil, not even so difficult as a vow to drink at the springs of the main European rivers, the Rhone, the Rhine, the Seine, the Loire, the Thames, the Garonne, the Danube, in order to have communion with their tutelary gods—which vow I fulfilled.

It was not a vow so difficult to carry out as the vow to tell the truth about history, which is a whole-time job and can never be completed though a man should live 1,000 years (and what is more

important, keep his faculties to his 999th birthday. For mere living is no good at all if one falls into second childhood, as might well happen to a man after 900).

It was not a vow so difficult to keep as the vow to cross the Channel in a small boat, single-handed under my own sail, and back again : dozens have done that—hundreds have done that.

It was not a vow so difficult to keep as the vow to walk from St. Sebastian to Santiago, or as the vow to walk from Toulouse to Saragossa. Anyone can see this page of the *Codex Argenteus* by paying his railway fare to Upsala. There are no asperities, there are no dragons. Nevertheless I am as glad at having done it as if I had performed a feat.

And, by the way, in all this wandering round the business of the *Codex Argenteus* I have not yet told you why it is called by that name. It is because its lettering is painted in silver upon sheets of purple background, and a very fine show it makes even now that it is faded and fatigued.

Here in this plain of Upsala I recalled Woden. He was certainly a man although, as the chronicler strikingly says, ‘He became a God.’ Yes ! He was a man living here in south Sweden and perhaps of the Gothic blood. Little did he know what fame would be his when he had disappeared ! He became Odin ; he came to sport two ravens

on his shoulders ; he got grafted on to tribes far away ; he became the Universal Father and at last he became a fine, great Prussian Anti-god.

He is that to-day and no doubt there are many other adventures before him.

Saxo Grammaticus, my kind and constant guide in the matters of the early Baltic world—a guide all the more valuable in that some sensible people have translated him into English—Saxo Grammaticus, I say, tells us all about Woden with such particularity that though it was but an ancient legend in his time it certainly came from a real root as do all ancient legends, including, of course, the legend of Glastonbury and of King Arthur and of Joseph of Arimathea and Avalon and *tout le tremblement*. The old stories about Woden which Saxo Grammaticus wrote down have a vividness which smells of reality. Also some of his adventures, especially his adventures in matrimony, were ridiculous enough to be true. Also he was the first, apparently, of those who crossed the Baltic to do what mischief they could on the further shore, a Swedish habit which continued till only the other day. As I believe in Hercules and many another hero before him so I believe in Woden. There he lived in his wooden hut in the plain of Upsala and something about him so impressed his contemporaries that his story became rooted and

grew. I say again he would be astonished if he came back and saw what had happened to him. He would think that times had greatly improved.

Yet in Upsala of all Swedish towns there is the least memory of Woden. There is no permanent memorial of Woden at Upsala. When the missionaries were translating the names of the week for the savages whom they so painfully educated into civilisation they gave Woden the middle of the week, and so we have Wednesday. By right they should have given that name rather to Thursday, for that was the day of Jove and Jove was Woden's opposite number in the south; but then Jove was the master of thunder and that function was already taken by Thor and so Woden was pushed out till he had to take the day of Mercury instead of the day of Jove, and anyhow Woden was a presiding god for merchants, I believe, so there was something of Mercury about him.

In these old tales of Saxo's one has hints of a chronology. Not only in Saxo but in other chroniclers you get the same hints accounting for the generations of half legendary heroes. They do not, of course, correspond even roughly, but scholars have made a sort of average, I am told, and it may be that Woden lived somewhere in the second century. Peace to him anyhow. I bear him no grudge for the follies and extra-

U P S A L A

gances of those who now want to revive him again.

§

As I wandered round Upsala Church I first paid obeisance to a dark Sarcophagus on which was the name of Emmanuel Swedenborg, the Visionary; next I admired as fine a piece of post-renaissance woodwork as I have seen in my life—the great Gilded Pulpit, one of the most striking things in the north; then I bought a photograph of the *Codex* and as I paid for it, trying to explain that I wanted to have three copies, a young man, a student at the University, came up to me and translated for me into English from Swedish. For I was here once more after forty-three years even more ignorant of Swedish than I had been on my first visit. It is inexcusable, this blank ignorance of men's speech in the land one visits; yet I have gone half over the world and all over Europe in that darkness and somehow carried along.

§

The learning of languages is a great duty, and certainly a man who is ignorant of languages carries a heavy handicap. I know something about it for there never was such a bad linguist.

RETURN TO THE BALTIC

I have had to do with French people all my life, off and on. I have read plenty of French, yet with what difficulty do I write it! I cannot even send a short message in French without asking someone better at the language than I to read what I have written and correct the mistakes. German I have none, Scandinavian in any form I have none, Flemish I have none, of Italian next to none, of Castilian next to none and of Catalan less. I can read and speak none of the Celtic tongues. Though I once began trying to learn Hebrew I soon gave it up, from laziness or finding other things to do—I forget which. Yet I have travelled far and wide in countries of foreign speech. I have managed it by picking up a very small vocabulary which I would forget again as soon as I had left the place. I say it not in boasting but in shame.

If you want to get hold of a foreign language when you are travelling your best quarry for a vocabulary is the newspaper. There seems to be a jargon common to all newspapers in the modern world. There are all sorts of fixed phrases recurring throughout the Press of Europe and America. They have no intellectual value but the journalist cannot get on without them and they are at least of this use, that when you have spotted one it helps you to translate the words into your own language.

Every now and then they get a new word or

phrase into this jargon. Just now they are running 'ideology' and as for the word 'democracy' it has spread like a rash ; you cannot get away from it and it is made to stand for pretty well anything, from the strange, outrageous and almost incomprehensible barbarism of Communist Moscow to the highly organised system of England with its firm class government based on the worship of rich men : from America with its powerful monarchy to the unfortunate French under their vile Parliamentarians.

Yet after all the word 'democracy' has a meaning. It means government by the people : a thing well enough in very small communities where the citizens can meet in one place and discuss affairs—a system which is excellent and just wherever it is possible to use it. But, alas, those places are very few : secluded mountain valleys, such as lie in the Alpine and Pyrenean hills ; certain islands ; and that is about all. There has happened to this word 'democracy' what has also happened to the word 'gentleman.' It connotes vaguely something supposed to be jolly and is made to cover almost anything which the user of it thinks jolly and likes to imagine himself connected with.

I mourn for the spoiling of the word 'gentleman' more than I do for the spoiling of the word 'democracy' for a gentleman was a highly definite thing. He was a specially English

product ; he was an animal peculiar to this island, hateful to most foreigners, admired of his own fellow citizens ; and now that highly specialised and useful term is being used sometimes as the equivalent of the word 'good,' sometimes the equivalent of the mere word 'male.' It cannot be helped. The murder is done. But what a pity !

Query : Can a man be a gentleman if he cannot ride a horse ?

I leave the point to debaters upon etiquette. George IV said that a gentleman was a man who had a little Greek and did not fiddle with his clothes, but that is too wide a definition. It would apply to Odysseus when he came out of the water after his raft wreck and yet Odysseus was not a gentleman, he was a king which is a very different thing. I think he would have disliked a gentleman, and our gentry would certainly have disliked him. On the other hand there was something of the gentleman about the local ruler whom he was off to meet—Nausicaa's father. If you will remember, we have seen that big-wig upon a throne and drinking wine out of a golden cup.

§

While I am on this point of language, let me urge how useful it would be to the comity of

nations if the funny spellings were dropped or translated into some common form—the Welsh ‘w,’ the Slav ‘cz’; and a kind word in passing upon that horrible habit of putting funny little marks over letters: dots, circles, half-moons and strokes.

There are the Greek accents, of which nobody knows anything to-day except the rough and soft breathings, that is the aspirate and the non-aspirate, and, in some degree, the circumflex. They are, for the rest, worthless; yet people go on printing them in Greek texts though nine times out of ten they are without any meaning to us. What is more, people pride themselves on knowing the Greek accents. The man who cannot get his accents right (and Heaven knows I never can save by laboriously copying a text) is ridiculed for ignorance though they only very rarely make any difference to the meaning and we don’t even know what effect they had on pronunciation. They were invented long after the classical Greek had formed and set. They were invented, I am told, in Alexandria as guides to teach barbarians the right way to talk, but they certainly have failed to do *that*.

The French accents are a bit of a bore but at least still in active use over the educated world; the French system of accents is a living thing and the French language is so very widely spread that they are taken for granted everywhere.

But look at the accents stuck on to the consonants and vowels of the Czechs and the rest of them. Lord, how they confuse counsel! The worst sinners in this matter are the Arabic scholars. Western men who know Arabic are never at rest until they have re-spelled some name to which we had all got used. Even the Koran which we had known for generations as the Koran (I am told it means 'the book') appears spelled in a novel fashion with a Q and there are apostrophes and there are all manner of things disfiguring our inherited way of spelling Islamic names. The motive is plain enough. It is effect. It is showing off. They had far better leave the thing alone.

§

Thus my ignorance of languages, which I do so deeply and honestly deplore, cuts me off from the literature of half the white world. For translation, save in rare miracles like Bédier's or Urquhart's or the English version of *Le Sage*, never comes off. Here I am in Scandinavia, and I know that I miss worlds by not knowing Scandinavian literature, though, it is true, they accuse it of gloom and for that I have no use: it is an uncreative neutral thing is gloom.

Some advance the theory that the gloom of modern Scandinavian letters is due to the long



UPSALA THE GOLDEN PULPIT

To face page 114

nights and the equally inhuman length of the summer days. It may be so, but I doubt it. It is true that there is something despairing and diabolic about the oldest pagan traditions and in the era when that northern world was peopled with fantastic figures of Terror ; but during their brief centuries of full Faith the Scandinavians seem to have been happy enough, and certainly the Danes are happy enough to-day. Undoubtedly gloom recaptured them when the Faith waned. There is something about the endless repetitive similar woodland, the endless stretches of dark water, the endless hours of the winter nights, which makes men brood after a fashion unknown to the South.

I suppose that is why Sweden has produced her famous mystics also. It was a moving thing to come in the Church of Upsala upon that draped sarcophagus : and on it the striking words ‘ Emmanuel Swedenborg.’ He saw things of his own kind, but he saw them late in life : they were very real to him and they have taken root in the minds of others. After a fashion he is a sort of eighteenth-century cousin of St. Brigg, but I am afraid he was more concerned with devils than she was with angels. Anyhow, they both saw things which were not of this world.

The most famous of modern Swedes in the way of writing, Ibsen, is, as the Americans put it, ‘ no packet of fun.’ He does not cultivate

laughter nor provoke it. To quote the Americans again in one of their less known poetical masterpieces :

‘ That prophet from far Scandinavia
Was shocked by the world’s bad behaviour.’

Well, there they are, all in a line, beginning with the witches and trolls and the pagans who fought serpents and the false gods, half sublime, half grotesque, and carrying it into our own time with no great interlude of joy and yet with what a sense of beauty !

For though he cannot read a hundred words of their tongue the ignorant foreigner can have communion with the Scandinavians through the eye, for in Sweden as in Denmark men have loved and made plastic beauty in marble and bronze.

§

Most striking is the way in which both Swedes and Danes have manifested this capacity for creative sculpture. You see it everywhere. It is a tradition dating from rather more than 100 years ago, and typified in that famous name of Thorwaldsen. In the public gardens of their towns, in their newer churches, in their streets, you have good figure work everywhere, an almost unfailing taste, and even that which they have been reproached for lacking—life.

THE STATUES

But will this last? Will our descendants find the Scandinavians still possessed of such sobriety, proportion, and native feeling in the Scandinavian statuary of a lifetime hence?

There is a good deal to make one doubt it. To begin with, excellence in any art seems, in modern times at least, to have wandered about from place to place and changed from generation to generation. Remember how the Netherlands, and more particularly the northern Netherlands, almost suddenly produced a school of painting more living and more real than any other in Europe. Remember how it rapidly ended.

There are no laws governing these things. Men paint, draw, build, carve at the very highest level; their sons sink to dull and lifeless things at the best, or mere *unnatural* ugliness at the worst. The time in which we live would seem to be one in which a reaction against beauty is at work, so that fashion, the most powerful of social agents, leads men to prefer the barbarous and the repulsive for the sake of novelty. More than any other civilisation, the civilisation of modern Europe since the Renaissance has proved unstable in its rules and forms of external expression. There seems to have been no norm save a search for a new style, and now this has run to its extreme novelty sought for its own sake; novelty boasting of shock as a test of its power; novelty repudiating every tradition simply

because tradition, the necessary cement of society, has come to weary the maker and his audience. The thing has gone far in my own trade of writing, and has gone very far in architecture. There, those who retain a faculty for criticism exclaim and protest, but nothing seems to reverse the current, and each new thing is more detestable than the last ; so that one knows not whether to compare the style of something intended for human habitation with a factory, a prison or a nightmare.

Stockholm has sinned particularly in this field. Less violence is done to the eye in modern Copenhagen, but even there one can complain of what is being done.

In the countrysides of either country I saw no invasion of the abominable, but in the towns the disease has broken out badly. In all my experience of this return after a lifetime to places which impressed me so vividly in my youth, this is the worst and most portentous change.

I have compared the modern disease in architecture to the chaotic fantasies which followed in the second lifetime after the break-up of society under the effect of the Reformation—such a monstrosity as the seventeenth-century Sapientia tower in Rome, or as the ludicrous combination of a Greek capital and flutings with a tapering spire in Bermondsey.

But these things were isolated, the modern

things are collective, covering whole areas of architectural action. It reminds one of what a late Papal Encyclical said of atheism to-day, compared with the atheism of yesterday. 'The denial of God,' it remarked, 'was once the privilege of a few. It has now become the commonplace of the many.' So with the denial of beauty. For the two things go together, deliberate contempt for beauty is atheist in architecture and in design.

As for the two excuses men now make for the ugly, they depend upon two suppositions which we can soon find, by mere experience, to be false. The first is the supposition that suitability to a particular function will of itself breed beauty; the other is that new material compels you to adopt a new form, though that form be meaningless or disgusting. Against the first proposition there is the plain fact that men have always and everywhere added ornament to structure; that man cannot live without ornament; that any unspoilt man left to himself, and making what-not with his hands, will adorn it. For when men say that function compels you to the abandonment of beauty in art, they forget that the enjoyment of beauty is the first of functions in art.

As for your material condemning you to hideosity, it is an error so obvious that it is difficult to understand how it could have arisen.

When men could use cut stone instead of wood,

they did not on that account abandon the perpendicular line of the pillar, the horizontal line of the beam, the triangle of the roof-end. When men had for material tiles and rafters they did not on that account abandon the curves of the tent whence they derived their memories ; curves which still stamp the Mongolian buildings. There is no reason why a concrete bridge should ravage the mind with emptiness and despair save of course its cheapness, and I am not so sure that cheapness is not at the root of the 'stark' rubbish under which we are sinking to-day as under a mortal load.

§

You tell me that instead of writing on the Baltic, which I sat down to do, I am wasting your time on empty denunciations. You are right, as King Dagobent said to St. Eligius (of Noyon, I think, of Limoges, I know) in the matter of the Breeches. Let me continue my journey and get to the Baltic coast and thence by the Canal to the Great Lakes, which I remember so well after so many years and which are the special feature of this land.

§

On the Baltic side of Sweden the coast is a mass of small islands, a perfect swarm of them.

FOREST

If you look at them on the map you will see that they look like hundreds of insects fastening on a fruit: they are monotonous enough and very lonely, but they have a landscape of their own as one threads between them in the water always calm, no matter how hard it may be blowing from the east.

As with the mainland all these islands are densely covered with little conifers, the forest which is spread like a carpet all over the Swedish world, and here and there in an inlet one comes upon some little discreet harbour-town.

I remember one such in my journeying where they were loading that main modern export of Sweden, iron ore. They were sending it, I remember, to the other side of the Baltic, to a German port, presumably for the making of guns, and yet more guns: a pleasing thought for those who have put Prussia upon her feet again—the international bankers, and especially those of London. Sweden is a mass of iron, and her export of this is inexhaustible, as also her export of wood, but actually the regulation of this the country manages extremely well. Not so long ago one might have said of Sweden that it would never export anything except soldiers, and those it exported with special success, because of all the countries around it was the only one with something approaching conscription. That statement may be challenged,

but I think it is true. When Gustavus called for a levy of men he got them, and most of them were not even technically volunteers. It was an advantage which disappeared with the outbreak of the French Revolution, though long before that even the great States were beginning to conscript in a veiled fashion. Louvois, under Louis XIV, the man who was gathering the armies together, admitted rather cynically that the voluntary system he was using was only voluntary in name and that by the time the men he had recruited had got to their regiments they could only be kept very sorely against their will.

I hope, talking of the exports of Sweden, that there will never be a rush upon Swedish wood beyond the present arrangement. That disturbance could only happen, of course, if the excellent Swedish regulations were to break down or be superseded, but it is true that the modern world is hungry for wood, and for wood put to a very base use. For I am told that by the massacre of forests we get wood pulp, and of wood pulp is made what the trade calls newsprint. I read in an American paper (and that is my only authority for the statement) that one of those huge New York Sunday editions cost 40 acres of woodland. I seem to remember the figure 40. It is an appalling thought, when you consider both the rubbish that is printed and the vast mass of that rubbish and its lease of life. It appears and is forgotten

almost in the same day. And during its little passage through the daylight it does nothing but harm.

Our fathers (or perhaps I should say our grandfathers) believed that a thing called the ' freedom of the Press ' would solve half the ills of mankind. We now know what that means. So far from solving the ills of mankind, it has increased them out of all knowledge. It means freedom for a few millionaires to print any falsehood, to suppress any truth, and to increase their vast possessions by debauching the masses with appeals to their base appetites : stuff written for slaves by slaves.

It is fortunate indeed that the exploitation of all that timber has fallen under careful and conscientious governments, now at their best since the enfranchisement of Finland. For those governments restrict what under mere capitalist greed would be a massacre of the northern woodlands. The exploitation of the deal is regulated and the capital value of that vast woodland remains intact, though streams of cargo steamers laden with sawn planks high on the decks pour down it during all the open season. There is something violent, with a mixture of the tragic and the comic, in the sacrifice of those silent shades to the basest of modern needs, the popular Press. It is a relief when the traveller comes on the loneliness of these forests to know that they

RETURN TO THE BALTIC

will not here be ruined as they have been ruined on the eastern seaboard of Canada, notably in Newfoundland, which has been ruined not only in patches of cutting, but financially through the usury which has sucked the blood of the place and left it in the talons of our banking system.

§

From the Baltic coast a canal reaching right across Sweden takes you to the first of the Great Lakes. The canal follows a depression which forms a natural way from sea to lake, though not without a 'saddle' which has to be crossed by locks. That depression was followed by commerce for centuries, and a great tower built by the Vasas dominates over the narrows, taking toll of merchandise on its way to the Great Lakes.

These immense inland waters, almost seas, would be of prodigious effect in any of the more populated parts of Europe. Imagine a sheet of navigable water 100 miles by 40 in the midst of England or France. What history would have gathered round it, what shrines, what great cities: how it would have divided or joined whole provinces: how it would have produced its special local population, and the mass of their traditions!

Here in the North, in the midst of those



THE GREAT LAKE THE WITTER

To face page 175

JONKOPPING

interminable forests, this interminable empty land of granite and iron, trees, of innumerable streams and lesser meres also beyond number, they are not of the same effect. Yet the effect they produce is very great. This is especially true of the Wetter if one approaches it, as it is commonly first approached by travellers, from the high land to the southern end, where one overlooks a vast expanse—a view not indeed to the further end, for that could only be possible if there were high mountains there—but at any rate so far northward that the sky-line begins before the further shore is reached.

At this southern end of Lake Wetter stands the ancient town of Jonkopping, which was a local centre of government and continually appears in Swedish history. It still has its importance to-day, and it was its administrative function which dignified it with fine official seventeenth-century architecture which is still the mark of the place. But its chief modern use, or one of its chief modern uses, is for the recreation of distant Stockholm. The moderately high land just behind Jonkopping and to the east of it overlooking the great plain of water, is full of those small country houses which the Swedes love to build and adorn with gardens. Also there is here water power which has been used harmlessly for the manufacture especially of metal-work, and as I was told, of arms ; and, of course,

for the local production of electricity, though it has nothing of the importance of the huge Trohatten cascades, the nature, capture and use of which is one of the most interesting things in Europe.

From the larger of the two lakes runs the River Gota, which takes the overflow down by its valley to the open sea, with Gothenburg at its mouth.

On that river course fell, ever since the ice melted, a series of big cascades, an immediate fall in level scores of feet down, and a magnificent sight it must have been when the spate was at its full, but to-day all that is gone. The waters have been captured to-day into pipes and made to drive turbines which provide electricity for most of Sweden (except Stockholm, I am told) and even for part of Denmark overseas. The bed of the old waterfalls lies rocky and bare.

But the industrial use of water power has not done nearly as much harm here in the North as it has in France, where it seems more is made of water power, oddly enough, than in any other country. The squalor of industrial capitalism has been allowed to desecrate the valley of Maurienne lamentably. I have myself seen in my lifetime this evil arise and grow.

The Maurienne ought to be one of the sacred valleys of Europe. It was here that the Angel of the legend and of the great epic appeared to

Charlemagne, giving him the sword Durandal for the greatest of his captains, and with it he girt Roland. I never knew it in its ancient silence, for the railway had been brought along it before I was born ; but I knew it all my youth before industrial capitalism came to murder it. The railway along the Maurienne Valley led to the Mont Cenis Pass, and served in due time the earliest of the Alpine tunnels, yet the railway did no great harm. It was a transit only, up to Modane and on to Italy. What did harm was the capture of the torrent without provision for beauty.

The power thus harnessed has not befouled the sky as coal would have done, but it has brought into the Maurienne the dispossessed and their unhappiness, it has brought greed and insecurity and poverty and unrest, and the masses of scattered rubbish which industrialism accumulates unless or until it be tamed. The Maurienne has become a heart-breaking sight. You may still climb up the narrow streets of St. Jean and find yourself in the traditions of a thousand years, yet all about you is this vile degradation of man's talents by greed.

In the Pyrenees things are not quite as bad, but they are bad enough. I know more than one valley of the Jura also on which the abomination has set its mark. It is to the honour of Sweden that her water power has been taken without

RETURN TO THE BALTIC

involving such adjuncts. It has there given rise to no such towns as originated from the same source of water power in South Lancashire and the West Riding. That decent cleanliness which Scandinavia boasts has harnessed and garnished all. May it long so continue! As a proof that it is not the machines of man that befoul mankind but the wrong use of those machines, and especially the oppression of the poor.

§

These great inland waters when they are so widely extended have always seemed to me in some way natural. It may be fantasy or it may be recognition, but I never could get used to something which was like the sea and yet was not the sea. I had that feeling of incongruity profoundly impressed upon me early in life when first I saw the Great Lakes of Northern America. Where was the salt? No matter how enormous the reservoir it lacked in some way that sense of infinity which the ocean has and lends to its narrow seas as well. Why this should be so, I know not. Perhaps it is an illusion born of the map: if so, it is a strong illusion.

Moreover, the wave movement of the fresh water, and therefore the nature of the beaches on its shores, is something very different from that of the sea. The fresh water is lighter, the waves

THE GREAT LAKES

are steeper, of course, and therefore they have in a heavy gale a sort of spiteful fury of their own which lacks the majesty of the ocean ; 'the strength of the ocean' which runs all round the world and as was shown on the shield of Achilles. Storms also rise too rapidly and fall too rapidly, and there is a sort of deserted feeling about fresh-water inland lakes of great size which one does not feel about the salt. They have not the same gods and goddesses, and the powers of their deities are lesser powers : or perhaps no gods visit them.

Here it was the ice of course which scooped out the great hollows wherein such miles of inland water lie, as it also scooped out the lesser hollows which produced the myriad lakes of Sweden and of Finland. Indeed, whatever you see all about the Baltic lands leaves you with a memory of the ice.

§

Time will bring back the old glories of Trollhatten and therefore of the cascades and the peopling of empty gorges with foam and sound. Time, though it will at last destroy also, wear down and smooth the steps of the waterfall, will get rid of man's use thereof long before nature has felt the levelling. There will be ruins soon turned to dust and scraps of rusty iron which the

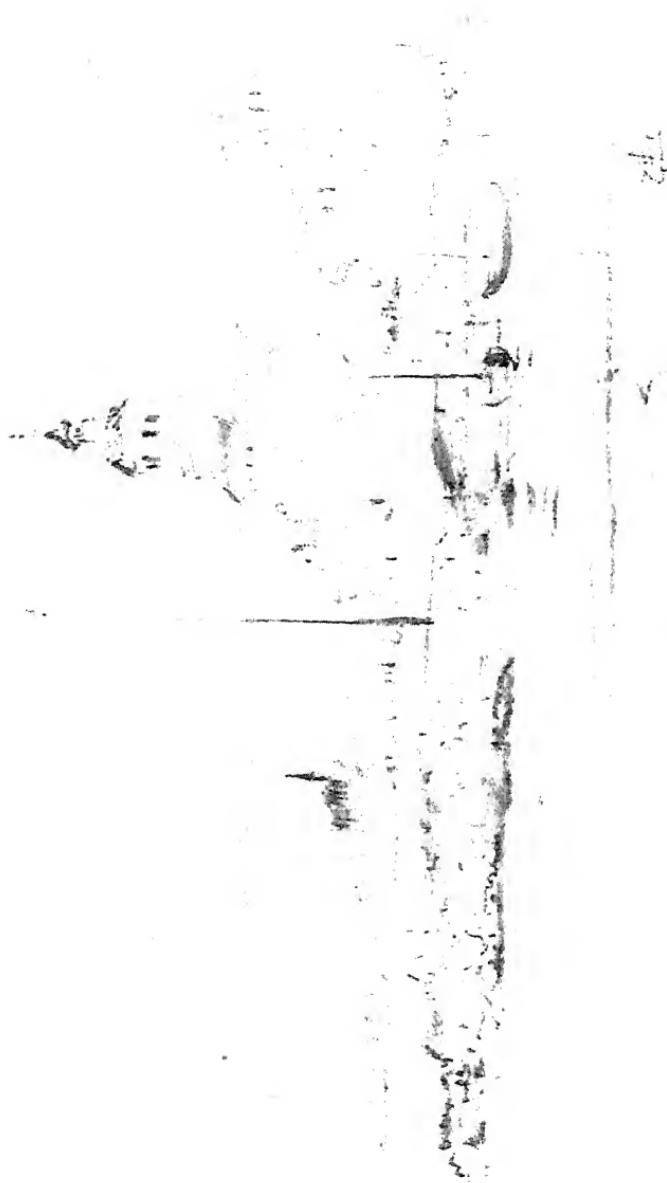
grasses and the trees will hide and the water roaring down again, as it did when it was free before the brief episode of our mechanical day.

It is as well that time should now and then repair the ills of mortality, for Heaven knows it adds to them perpetually and grievously. Hence the motto which a poet engraved upon the inside of his expensive watch and then transferred to a sundial :

‘Ephemeral mortal, mark my emblem well :
I tell the Time, and Time in Time will tell.’

§

Sweden, though so military a state, has not been largely fortified : neither the great stone castle period of the Middle Ages nor the transformed earthwork fortification imposed by artillery in the seventeenth century left on Sweden, as it has left in most European countries, a permanent mark everywhere. There are examples of the mediæval stonework, whereof Vadstena is the finest example and the most memorable one. There is the Tower of Gustavus Vasa, a simple affair on the roadway crossing the peninsula from east to west. There are ruins here and there, but there is no foison of castles and only the rarest examples of earthwork against artillery.



JONKOPPING.

To face page 130.

It seems that in even the earlier history of Sweden men troubled less about defence than elsewhere. You have not there those great monuments of earthwork before record began such as our prehistoric camps in England and our great dykes, and the rarer corresponding French examples; you have nothing corresponding to the Danework. I think the reason can be discovered. The Swedes warred out of their own country, they were menaced upon no land frontier. Now and then they were taxed and administered from Denmark, emancipated again, and so on, but there was no isthmus to be held against foreign pressure and no centre of resistance against foreign armies—at least, I suppose that is the explanation of this absence of fortification in Sweden. You have something of the same sort in modern England, which is another parallel between the two countries. England was crammed with fortification until the Civil Wars. There were walls round her towns, there were stone castles everywhere, and even in the later period when artillery had begun there were earthworks against siege guns, some, I believe, at Portsmouth, and one famous, very lengthy but ephemeral example in the 'Lines of Communications' which were drawn round London after the City had decided against the constitutional government of Charles I and had joined the Rebellion of the taxpayers against the

Crown. The only relic I know now surviving of earthwork against artillery is (or was) at Berwick, I suppose because Berwick was a frontier town, but if I remember right the old gate of Berwick facing northward against the Border was almost like a bit of Vauban's later work, scarp and counter-scarp and all the rest of it. I have not seen it for thirty years, but I hope it is still there. All relics of the past ought to be preserved as far as possible. They are like mortar, binding the generations, and they teach history, and apart from that they are in themselves venerable.

I have just spoken of the Tower of Gustavus Vasa along the road across from sea to sea. When I say 'road,' I do not mean a hard road, I mean a passage or way.

It was, like all communications in Sweden, a waterway, which after all sorts of adventures, withdrawals, renewed attempts, and so on, was completed at last in the eighteenth century, if I remember right, possibly the last bit of work in the nineteenth.

It is an artificial linking-up of four rivers and the two great lakes, and is called the Gotha Canal. It is very well known nowadays because it is well served by tourist steamers. The Americans who come to Europe have heard all about it, and wisely use it, for it is a fine piece of travel, taking one from the Baltic to the North



THE CANAL

To face page 133

THE CANAL

Sea in about two days, sleeping on board, and stopping at many places on the way.

You start from Stockholm, you go down the Molar till you get to the sea, then you come across down the coast to the entry of the next river. You go up that as far as it is navigable and it is there that the Tower of Gustavus Vasa was built, to command the main traffic across Sweden from east to west.

At the end of the navigable water the road took up the task and joined the headwaters of another stream, and this led you down to the first of the great lakes, the Wetter. To-day the Canal crosses the watershed by a series of little locks and you thread through fields and orchards, high up above the world, in the little steamer which just fits the locks and serves this traffic. It is a leisurely and charming way of seeing the country. I do not know whether it existed (this passenger steamer service, I mean, not the Canal) when I was first in Stockholm, at any rate I did not see it, and I was glad to see it now.

The Castle of Vadstena is not at the mouth of this Canal, which comes out on the lake at Motala, but it is close by and I fancy it was this passage across from sea to sea combining the river and the road which suggested the fortification of Vadstena. Perhaps there was a natural harbour here, though small, or perhaps it was the European reputation of the place through St.

Brigitt. I do not know, but anyhow Vadstena became the jumping-off place for crossing the lake.

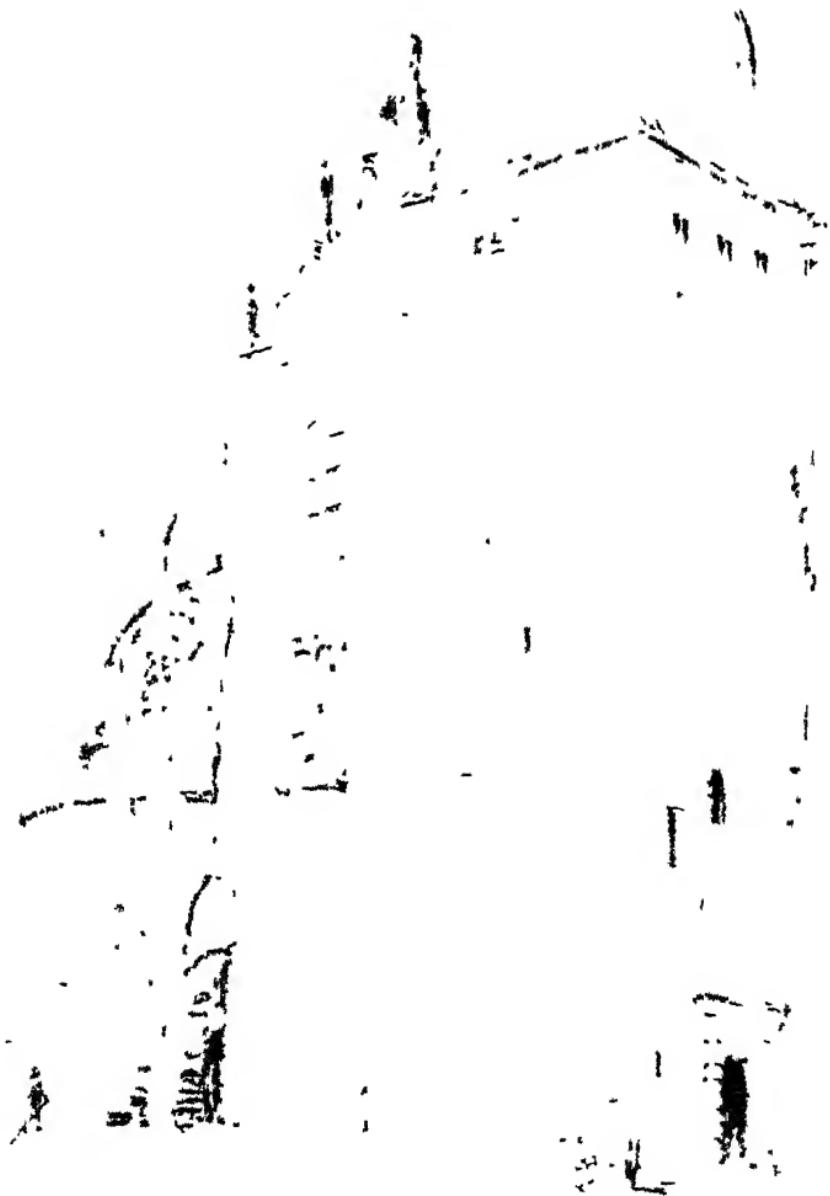
§

The Castle of Vadstena is a noble thing indeed. And if one may say so, without offending the pride of Sweden, exceptional for the landscape in which it stands. It has all the strength of that Renaissance in which it arose. The moat about it and the sheer walls, their unbroken height, give a unity which most defensive works of that age lack.

It was, like most royal castles of the Transition from the Middle Ages, as much a Palace as a stronghold, but a stronghold it was, and a formidable one.

The lake may indeed be crossed from any point, but the main passage from sea to sea running as it did down the Motala River close at hand, justified the building of Vadstena here. It fulfils its ancient purpose no longer, but its grandeur endures : the sense of creative power and of man impressing his seal.

Vadstena Castle went half out of use in its first grandeur : it has never recovered the old part which it played in the life of the country, and that is a pity. I hope its use will be restored. The Bernadottes should be highly praised if they



VADSTENA CASTLE THE TOWER

To face page 134

bring Vadstena to life again, and they may be better known by it a century hence than by the name of Wagram, on which field began the quarrel between the Marshal and his maker. Also the Bernadotte of Wagram said a biting thing which must have wounded the Emperor. For after the Archduke had withdrawn safely enough but cut off from his capital, the disappointed Bernadotte decried that day, saying, 'What a victory ! No prisoners ; no guns !' And Wagram is one more out of a million warnings against prophecy. Who, on the evening of that battle, guessed in all Europe that the man commanding on the right would end by providing yet another dynasty far off beyond the Baltic ? Or for that matter could have imagined in 1809 that only four years later the man who so commanded the right wing would betray his master at Leipzic ; wherein (but as a fruit of Moscow) the remaking of Europe crumbled. And Lord ! the chaos into which it has fallen now !

§

Vadstena Castle is wonderful enough. But there is in Vadstena something more wonderful and perhaps even more enduring : it is the presence of St. Brigit.

The relics of the old civilised time when all Western Christendom was Catholic are like

submerged rocks under the sea in that they have disappeared from the eye, and the superficial observer knows nothing about them; also in that no one even hears of them unless it is his business to chart those waters. But where they differ from submerged rocks is that it is a pleasure, though a melancholy pleasure, to discover them.

I discovered one such in Vadstena, the home of a woman who was once as famous as it is possible for any woman to be and who is now half forgotten, though not, I am glad to say, in her own place.

This woman is St. Brigg of Sweden, and her centre of action whence her influence radiated, and, I suppose, in a hidden way radiates still, was Vadstena, on that great lake which is almost an inland sea and under the shadow of that great castle which is one of the noblest buildings in Europe.

§

There are two St. Bridgets, and they often get mixed up in people's minds. There is St. Bridget of Ireland, who lived in the very moment of the Conversion, at the origins of universal Christendom, and who was a sort of twin pillar with St. Patrick; and there is this other St. Brigg of Sweden.

I suppose the two names are the same, and

perhaps the second was called after the first, but most people nowadays who write on the subject at all are great sticklers for a separate spelling and for calling the one *Bridget* and the other *Brigitt*. But I care not. May both of them bridge the gulf for me between this world and the next.

I came upon St. Brigitt in Vadstena, by a sort of accident, not expecting her. I had heard of her all my life but I knew nothing of her connection, for I had never read details of her life. She was one of those people who counted so enormously at the very end of united Christendom and were then half eclipsed by the earthquake and ruin called the Reformation. She belonged to quite the end of the Middle Ages, as did the perhaps unknown and much debated (or perhaps recently established) author of the *Imitation*.

§

She was not what one might call your ordinary saint by any means. She was a woman of the world, a lady of great family by birth and by marriage and the mother of eight children. And, by the way, for rank ignorance of the past and of the nature of their own country commend me to people who wonder why so many names in the list of saints come from the wealthier classes of the Middle Ages

You might as well wonder why so many talked-about politicians (who are not to be compared with saints) come from the wealthier classes in England.

How many saints there are not canonised Heaven only knows (in the literal sense of that phrase); but obviously in a society such as that of the Middle Ages the names that would be publicly and commonly known would be the names of those who had leisure, whether through social position or through the monastic institution and the widespread and beneficent endowments of the Church—which covered every class of society. But all this is by the way. To return to St. Brigit.

Her point was that she had revelations and visions and that they had a vast effect upon her contemporaries. I have read none of them and even if I had I should not speak of them, for revelations are a kind of thing I do not understand—which is not to say that I do not believe in their reality, for I do. There is plenty of room for illusion in such matters, but it is far more unintelligent to deny visions than to examine them, and if you examine them you are often forced to admit them. Things of this sort have reality behind them half the time, whether they be common ghost stories or exalted experiences of supernatural things.



VADSTENA CASTLE

To face page 138

St. Briggitt was, I am glad to say, an ugly woman. She was therefore presumably fairly happy. It has been said that two things destroy character through vanity—literary fame in a man and beauty in a woman. St. Briggitt had plenty of literary fame before she died, but no beauty—if I am to judge by a remarkable wooden statue of her, most lively and capturing, which the Swedes have set up again in her poor old desecrated convent church. For the Swedes, being Lutherans and not Calvinists, have a certain attachment to images in worship, and they are returning to them, which is a point in their favour. It is always worth while remembering the formula that ‘The Faith was saved and continued by the use of images.’ It is a phrase to be repeated, because it challenges and tells the truth.

But no matter: St. Briggitt is there now again, carved, it is thought, by a German who may have been nearly contemporary; it is certainly a living portrait of a real person. It is the portrait of one not pretending to looks at all: heavy, and what used to be called ‘homely’; an excellent matron with a broad quiet face. She is sitting, and has on her lap an open book, to symbolise her title to fame, the record of her visions. She impressed me very much, and I think she would impress anyone who saw her thus, returned to her native place. She is not actually

smiling, but she might smile at any moment were she not of wood. Her people have returned not only to the image of her, but to a more lively memory of her, in which they are to be congratulated.

§

She is overshadowed by the Vasa Dynasty, just as her convent and shrine here is overshadowed by the castle.

I wonder what she would have thought of Gustavus and his loot, of his usurpation and the glory of his nephew as a champion for the destruction of all that she had cherished?

I should like to have heard her in a vision giving me her views of all that, of the patrimony of the poor destroyed and of her country torn away from the unity of Christendom.

Particularly would I have liked to hear her on the subject of Christina who gave up her throne partly in protest against the wrong turning her family had taken, but more I think because she wanted to be free. St. Brigg on the Vasas would be much more interesting than the Vasas on St. Brigg.

§

A great many things are happening by way of change in these our days and one of them is

the partial recovery of things long lost and submerged. Among these things much the most important are the forgotten, or half-forgotten, saints. The worse the world gets (and it is putting on pace in that direction) the more we have need of them.

§

The name of St. Brigg recalls to me that constantly recurring thing, the 'fault' in the succession of human moods, like the geological 'faults' in the rocks of the earth.

The European mind comes to a sudden break, starts all over again and begins doing quite new things. The men who were old men when Luther pinned his interesting (and, on the whole, *orthodox*) theses on the University chapel gates at Wittenberg had been full of St. Brigg. Her fame overshadowed all the men of the last Middle Ages ; her very great figure was part of their minds. The men who were boys when Luther pinned up his (on the whole, *orthodox*) theses (there is not one that has not been defended by the *orthodox* in its time) lived to see a generation which knew nothing of St. Brigg. There had been an earthquake and a big fall of strata : a 'fault' in European history. Yet she endures, as do all those who have founded orders.

I have not the scholarship to discuss the origin

of her foundation, but I know that it is a living thing to-day, and that you find it throughout Christendom—but not in her own country.

In so much she has survived (and indeed the saints tend to survive) in the Brigittine nuns. Yes, the saints survive. Their names live among men and when those names are eclipsed for a time they shine out again. But that great change which put up a screen between us and the Middle Ages makes one wonder whether, after the earthquake of our own time, which is still proceeding, there will not be another such fault?

If you were to come back to Europe in the year 2100 what would you see and hear and feel?

When next you go to Sweden call upon St. Brigit; leave your card upon her before leaving.

Not that the leaving of cards is a good habit, it is a bad one; and, now that calls are dead, cards, perhaps, visiting cards, also will die in due time. They say that the telephone has killed calling, as they also say that it has killed letter writing. It may be true of calling. It may be that men will never revive the habit of paying calls except those formal diplomatic calls which are the most deathly boring, unreal, things in the world, a ritual, as dry as dry—but letter writing is not dead, and that is a very good thing for history. There are, and I think always will be, men and still more women who are for ever writing

Vadstena.

VADSTENA

Loft park 112

letters, and what an excellent thing for history it is that the itch to do so should be so strong and so permanent !

For in the letters written by dead men and women you get a far better picture of the past than in any other form of writing. Letters are not, as a rule, written with a view to the general audience which they occasionally reach. They are written to individuals and they mention things casually which are of the first value in explaining what the people of the time really thought and did. The official view, the newspaper, the Chronicle says : 'His Royal Highness then proceeded to Lucifer House.' But the woman writing the letter says : 'Boo-boo was lifted into his car blind drunk, and when he got to Old Satan's he couldn't get out, so they drove him home.' It is always unconscious effect that is the best.

Diaries are very little use here. I have known not a few diarists in my life, and I can bear testimony that they were nearly all of them liars. Men publish their diaries with an object ; they see their public as it were in their mind's eye, and they pose accordingly. Even when they mean to tell the truth they are often writing of a thing half forgotten.

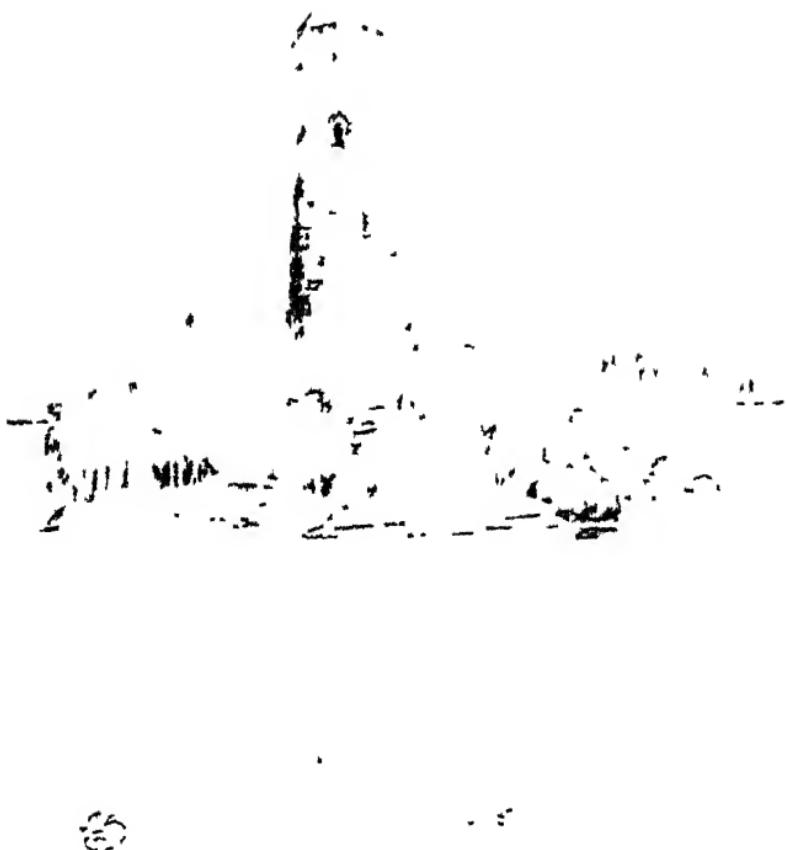
There is a story which you all of you know (and which I will therefore here repeat with gusto and at proper length) of the centenary of

the Battle of the Moskowa, which is also called the Battle of Borodino, the battle which permitted Napoleon to advance on Moscow and enter it. When the centenary festivities were on, in 1912, someone came and told the Czar that there survived a man of immense age who as a child had seen Napoleon. The man was sent for and was proud to tell his tale. 'Yes,' said he, 'I remember the Emperor well, young though I was.'

'What did he look like?' said they.

'Why, he was a tall, thin man with a red beard. That is what I remember best.'

Yet even diaries have their uses when they mention something which has nothing to do with the glory of the writer, nor is intended to produce a particular effect. A special example of this, which I have often quoted and will therefore here quote again, is the passage in Evelyn's diary when he was going through London to call on Grinling Gibbons, the sculptor. On his way he passed through Smithfield, and there he saw a woman being burned alive for poisoning her husband. If I remember right, he talks of the incident casually but not without pity. At any rate, he sees nothing extraordinary in it. Does not that sharply illustrate the mind of man in the later seventeenth century?



THE STEGEBORG

To face page 144

And now about Poland :—

The word 'Baltic' suggests to-day to the English mind Scandinavia, or, at the widest, Scandinavia plus (more vaguely) Russia. But there is another connection of equal, or greater, historical importance with the word 'Baltic' and that is the word 'Poland.' It was a close thing whether, with the development of the modern world, the Baltic should not be overshadowed, dominated, by Poland rather than by Prussia as it is at the moment; rather than by the culture of Sweden which has, in the past, encircled the inland sea by the Swedish hold upon both shores. Perhaps in the long run the Baltic *will* be Polish.

The modern European of the West has little appreciation of what is meant by that word 'Poland,' and an English reader probably less appreciation of it than anybody else. I know that by the end of the Great War the average English professional politician thought of Poland as a Russian province which had somehow been artificially carved out and made into a temporary State—he did not quite know why.

I have not infrequently told the story of two bets which I had in the year 1919 with two men, both now dead—a professional politician high up in his lucrative, not very reputable, trade, and a high-brow journalist, the editor of the best high-brow paper we had in England at that day

—which is the best to-day it would be difficult to say, for the word ‘best’ is not easy to apply in that connection. At any rate this high-brow editor (first rate at his trade), and this other man, the professional politician, each laid a bet with me in 1919 that Poland could not survive ten years. I was never paid—but then, I did not expect to be.

I remember yet another interesting thing about the resurrection of Poland. This time it is about neither a scribbler nor a parliament man, but a money-dealer, and very high up also!—too high up. He was an honest man and intelligent, and he told me, as everybody else did in those days, that Poland was doomed.

Poland was, as the French say, ‘*pas viable*.’ Just before we parted he looked over his shoulder at me with great cunning in his eyes, said a word in praise of the Polish aristocracy (for he was an educated man and knew something of the past), but added, ‘As for business! . . .’; and then he shook his head.

Oddly enough the one man, I think the only man then in the public eye, who wrote in English something sufficient about Poland, was Lord d’Abernon. He understood the full significance of the Battle of Warsaw and you would do well to read his book on that sharp turning-point in the history of the world.

For the resurrection of Poland is one of the

half-dozen major events of our time. Perhaps a lifetime hence it will stand out as the greatest of all those events, or, at any rate, the most formative. It will depend upon what happens to Prussia.

Prussia at the moment (having been re-established by English policy and the use of English Bank credits, now, I am told, 'frozen') dominates the Baltic to-day.

Those who think that history is a straight line (the common opinion of fools, and fools make the judgment of their day), those who do not perceive a curve and a most capricious curve, are taking it for granted that Prussia will dominate the Baltic for ever—but then, not thirty years ago, they would give you the same impression of the Russia of the Czars.

§

So far so good. But the interest of Poland to a man who is considering the Baltic of the past, and the story of Scandinavia, is the varying fortunes of the two cultures into which Europe split after the Reformation, their struggle to have the Baltic in their hands: to leave the Baltic a Protestant or a Catholic lake. Poland made its effort towards the close of the Middle Ages. It was on the way to achievement when the storm of the Reformation burst and it was

under that storm, and its later effects, that Poland lost the Baltic shore.

All energy polarises. The intense energies of the turmoil which shattered the unity of Christendom polarised as a matter of course, and the Baltic swung between the two poles. Anti-Catholicism centred in Sweden, the revival of Catholicism centred in Poland.

Because the thing happened our academic historians will have it that the thing was fated. They always say that! They always mouth wisdom after the event do the professors. How often have I not heard some pedant assuring his readers that the Slav by his nature was unsuited to the sea—even to such a sea as the Baltic. The same sort of man would have told you (if Poland had gone anti-Catholic (as it nearly did)), that there was something in the Polish nature or skull or skin that made Poland go Protestant of necessity. The same academic man would have told you that Poland had established her empire through 'a process,' and that a Calvinist Poland had been inevitable. The same man, or his pupil, will be telling you in the near future, if, as is probable, the political power of Poland increases, that Poland (being Catholic) must fail.

§

The test of the business is Dantzig. After the Great War the future of Poland and of the Baltic

Dantzig

15

23 Sept
1968

DANTZIG TOWN HALL

To face page 149

DANTZIG

turned upon whether Dantzig should be restored to its old Polish connection or no. The wiser men advised that it should be so returned. The men who think in terms of print, notably the politicians, voted the other way. They set up Dantzig as an anomalous 'Free City' (that *indeed* could not last !) and left the problem in this matter as they left nearly every other problem after the Great War, settled the wrong way, or, rather, unsettled.

A new Polish Dantzig would have fitted in perfectly well with the new Poland. Dantzig has been for centuries the natural port of Poland. Its name was Polish; its origin half Polish. It had become a Prussian city, but that was a recent thing as history goes. That recent thing appeared very late in Baltic history.

Well, they made their error and it has gone on fermenting, festering with all the other errors which were made in those days. The worst of all was the Bankers reviving Prussia and putting all Germans under Berlin.

Dantzig is a town, as the West should know, that is now doomed to die. But most of the towns that have had a great past and are doomed to die are the more wonderful for their doom. Old Dantzig as she was within the walls is only not a jewel because it is too majestic to be a jewel. Its architecture is that triumph of gilded stone which you find in commercial city after com-

mercial city along the flat shore in the Netherlands, in Frisia and here in the Baltic.

You find that gilded stone at its greatest perhaps in the market place of Brussels. You find it here in Dantzig all those hundreds of miles away ; the same spirit and the same achievement. One thing is lacking which Brussels has retained, the religion which had made the town in its origin. Therefore the great church of Dantzig is dead as the great church of Utrecht is dead, but enough remains alive all round it to perpetuate the marvel of the old builders.

Why does one say that Dantzig is doomed ? Because Gdynia sucks it dry. Dantzig arose as a port of exchange and reception for the whole great Vistula basin which is Poland. It stood at one of the mouths of the Vistula on the edge of the delta of the great stream where it falls into the shallow land-locked bay, the 'Hof' : shallow for the great craft of nowadays but manageable for the older ships.

The narrow winding channel of that tideless runnel brought the boats with their merchandise to the hard wharf within the muddy flats of the coast to Dantzig and there you have remaining—and very striking it is—the huge crane-hood which marked the centre of the harbour. I have seen more than one of these old crane-hoods up and down the harbours, though in the greater part of the ports they have disappeared. There

D A N T Z I G

is a sort of projecting wooden pent house protecting the main pulley from the weather, and within this worked the rope which hauled the cargoes out of the holds.

Meanwhile the rival that cannot but kill Dantzig grows apace. Gdynia was made at once by man's art out of nothingness through the great increase of power which modern machines have given to man. It is a port scooped out of the sand on the western edge of the great Hof, fitted with every appliance and advantage—and has deep water, at least, water as deep as the Hof will allow. Gdynia is served also by first-rate organisation of warehouse and shed, railway lines and all the rest of it. And through Gdynia, in spite of the blunder which left Dantzig German, Poland traffics with the sea. But can Gdynia remain Polish?

There is an arrangement, I am told, by which Gdynia has promised (so far) not to be too hard on Dantzig, but there can be no real competition between the two when modern political conditions change. For who to-day will risk a narrow winding shallow stream inland when he has on the very shore, but land-locked and protected from the outer waters, all the appurtenances and advantages of Gdynia?

Gdynia has one disadvantage however. It is a disadvantage attaching to many another Polish thing—it is the disadvantage of a name which

the West cannot pronounce: the old language difficulty again. It would be of service indeed to Polish relations if the Poles would consent to transliterate for the purpose of those relations and to spell their place names and the rest so that we of the West—especially those of us who are the friends of Poland—could read the names and pronounce them. I know that one is here up against a point of honour. There is the same trouble with the Welsh. There is no great harm done to Europe by the bristling difficulties of Welsh but great harm is done to Europe by anything which makes Poland the bastion of our civilisation seem outlandish.

Yes, Poland is the bastion. It saved us in the Battle of Warsaw as it saved us more than 200 years earlier in the Battle of Vienna. It is of high moment to Europe that Poland should be in full communion with the rest of Europe, and the Polish place-names—and personal names for that matter—are the difficulty.

§

It was with the Poles as with the French. They lay balanced between two forces which made a battlefield of all Christendom from 1530 to 1600. Among the scholars there was strong attraction to the new movement for establishing a national liturgy. With others the love of



DANTZIG THE ARSENAL

To face page 152

familiar usage in an ancient worship which was also universal to Christendom prevailed.

In the populace there was hope that any change might benefit them, but on the other hand a mistrust of 'German Heresy.'

With the rich the problem was simpler: on the one hand loyalty to their fathers and traditions; on the other, as in Sweden and England, the chance of vast new fortunes by the loot of education, hospitals, monasteries, shrines, endowments of all kinds.

Poland more than any other province of Christendom was in doubt between the flood of the Reformation and the attachment to older things.

More than once Polish Assemblies demanded the vernacular Mass, change of Liturgy, the Cup for the laity (of no meaning save as a symbol, but a most powerful symbol). With the Poles as with the French much of the best life after the height of the Renaissance was on the side of the revolt against unity. In Poland also a king quarrelled with a Pope (and quarrelled, oddly enough, on divorce), and you have the name of Laski, not the forged name of a Jew, but a true Pole famous among the reformers, famous even in distant England. The see-saw and hesitation did not end till well after the middle of the century. Even so the doubtful field had to be re-occupied.

The recovery of Poland was a chief triumph of the Jesuits. The Society re-established Poland, though here, as in France, it was the wealthiest men who most inclined to the new doctrines. Happily for Poland and for Europe there had not been here so much loot available as in England and Sweden. The lesser gentry were not so much tempted, but perhaps what did most good was that irrational force of a nickname and the mere association of ideas. The Reformation began to be talked of as 'that German thing,' and the Poles, like the Danes, though a very different nation, dreaded the power of the empire.

Yet remember that Poland, had she received the full effect of the Reformation, might well have benefited on the material side. The breakdown of European civilisation let usury loose and the letting loose of usury created that credit system which has so vastly increased the wealth of the nations which adopted it and which is only now beginning to appear as a poison. Also in Sweden as in England the Reformation depressed the peasantry to the advantage of the wealthy, favoured adventure, and therefore enhanced leadership, judgment in commercial adventure, a readiness to accept novel instruments and new methods.

The Reformation killed the Guild. It gave us in the long run industrial capitalism, but its first fruits were only triumphs among the towns,



DANTZIG THE STOCKTURM

To face page 154

where it meant new energies, new adaptations. In these the Poles, like all communities which had preferred the sacred things and the traditions, lagged behind the rest.

But probably what hurt the strength of Poland most was the loss of monarchy. The best of the later kings said, when his first Assembly gathered, that the whole task of government was to govern. Zamoyski, his chancellor, who had also made him king, knew that.

But how should kingship govern without continuity? This new Polish crown was elective at the hands of an aristocracy. Permanent kingship there was not. Sigismund the IIIrd, the champion of the old Faith, he who made Warsaw the capital, would have done it if any man could, but the forces of rebellion were too strong. It is a true symbolism which puts him on that pillar in Warsaw, holding in the one hand the cross and in the other the sword. Yet the Cross of Christ is also the symbol of that which lost the Baltic to Poland. He saved the Faith of Poland, he saved the soil of Poland, too, triumphing to the east by land—but he lost the sea.

He was a Vasa, the legitimate heir of Sweden and indeed accepted as king, but his religion was too much for the new millionaires. That religion endangered their great fortunes based on the loot of the church lands and revenues.

RETURN TO THE BALTIC

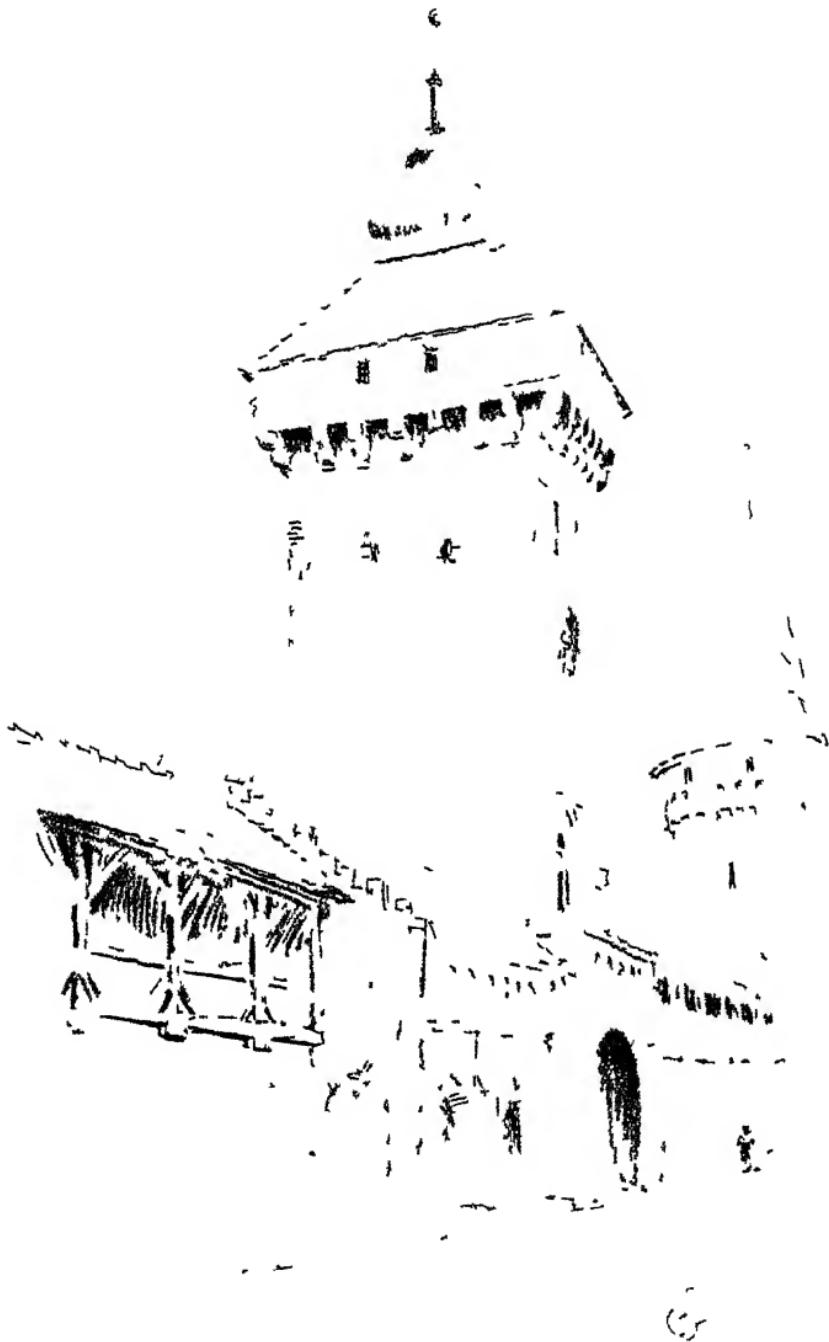
He was driven out and, though he triumphed in the great flats of the east, the sea was not recovered. From his time onward Sweden is the conquering power, barring the Poles from the ways that led to the open seas, and to the ocean.

§

It was in the second lifetime after the full effect of the Reformation that Catholic Poland, like Catholic Ireland, was submerged. In the late seventeenth century the effects of the Reformation were clinched.

The Polish fortunes were at their lowest. In the eighteenth century Poland fell a prey to the growing power of Protestant Prussia. It is a very good example of how the thing that is both prophesied and dreaded does not usually come off. Another unexpected evil takes its place. Sweden had barred Poland from the sea. After that the Swedes continued to invade and at the worst moment reached the very heart of the country at Czenstohowa. Yet it was not they that benefited by the collapse of the restricted, harassed and undermined Polish monarchy. The beneficiary was Prussia.

It was Frederick of Prussia who was the real author of the partition. His active and willing accomplice was the Empress of Russia, but the main responsibility lies with that great soldier,



CRACOW THE GATE OF ST FLORIAN

To face page 146

the Hohenzollern, whose sword after his death went on its travels : first taken by Napoleon into France as a trophy (for Napoleon vastly admired Frederick's genius) : then, after the defeat of Napoleon, returned.

There was more than one partition of Poland, but throughout the bad business—the launching of our modern moral anarchy in international affairs—it is Prussia that presides over the murder.

England being morally an ally of Prussia for nearly two centuries, the part Prussia played has naturally been under-emphasised in our official histories, the new Oxford and Cambridge historical school of the nineteenth century. The generation of English which was then growing up held Russian Czardom to be the chief and most dangerous enemy of England, especially after the defeat of the French in 1870. All English policy turned upon the idea that an invasion of India from the Russian Empire was to be most dreaded and most guarded against—yet another of those expected things which did not happen.

On account of our attitude towards Russia, the movements of Russian Cossacks on the Polish soil were underlined ; while we heard much less of the corresponding Prussian action. Both robbers, both marauders, combined in a violent hatred of the Polish religion, and therefore of the Polish people ; but there is this much at least to

be said for the old Russia that it did not work towards the dispossession of the Poles on their own soil. The Prussian Government had that for an object.

We used to hear in the old days that the only reason Russia did not do as much harm as Prussia to the Poles was that the Russians were less efficient. But it was more than that ; it was a certain similarity of origins, and perhaps (though this idea may be extravagant) a certain affinity of blood between all Slavs.

The really tragic thing was that the Austrian crown did not sufficiently oppose the wickedness of the Partition. Maria Theresa was heart-broken about it. She uttered a prophecy which has proved lamentably true, when she said that her children and her children's children would rue the day in which the deed was done. Yet she took her share of the spoils.

It was only a corner of Poland that ultimately fell to Austria. It was given more political freedom than the rest. There were sympathies of religion at work which is a force superior to that of nationality and far superior to that of race, but then came at last a complete annexation of what may be called 'Carpathian Poland,' the sources of the Vistula and the upper waters of that river and, more important than anything else, the ancient capital, Cracow.

Though Sigismund had made of Warsaw the



CRACOW THE WAVE!

To face page 159

political centre of Poland (which it has remained from his time onwards) yet Cracow will always be the real heart of the people, the sacred place. And one feels in Cracow the reality and the presence of the Polish soul as one feels it nowhere else. That is but the judgment of a chance foreign traveller, and as like as not romantically out of perspective, for after all Cracow is a frontier town not central to the Polish realm. Yet never have I trodden the streets of Cracow when I have visited and re-visited the town without a feeling of being in the immediate presence of that holy something which inhabits Poland like a secret flame.

The Church of Our Lady *from within*, when you enter it from the market place, strikes you suddenly like a vision : something hardly of this world. It is of a supernatural beauty. That secret influence of which I speak was at work to make it so. It is though one were transported within a casket of jewels all aflame with a silent but ubiquitous light of every colour, and as though that silence were a music from beyond the skies. I know of nothing to compare with it in Europe. Although there are many things of its kind, none of them achieve this intensity.

The Polish realm while it was a sovereign power preserved Cracow from too much change. The Habsburgs did well to carry on that tradition. The old gate is still fully of its own old time. I

heard when I was last in the place some rumour that on some bad and false temporary excuse it might be interfered with. Any modification which should mar its character would be a grave error. It is more than a relic and more than a symbol. It has in it no mark of an unearthly beauty which is centred in the Lady Church ; it is but part of an ancient defensive ; but it is alive all the same and carries on the past : a task which is the noblest assignable to any material thing.

The other main element in the old defensive system of Cracow is, of course, the castle on the rocky hill which rises from the very bank of the Vistula ; here a shallow, not very broad, stream, beginning its long journey to the Baltic, in the course of which it builds up, as round a spinal column, the whole business of Poland.

The infamy of the Partition is nowhere better exemplified than the way in which it arbitrarily divided the course of the Vistula ; the new frontiers cut three times across that river, the course of which is the integrity of Poland itself.

This castle of Cracow above the Vistula, the Wavel, is not only very striking in its site, but has been, like most ancient sites of its kind, well used. It is full of the memory of Kosciusko, whose tomb lies within it.

It has about it in its outline and dimensions a challenge such as no other point in the country offers, for Poland is almost wholly a country of



THE CHURCH OF THE WAVE

To face page 161

great plains, and when one has left the foothills of the Carpathians, as one goes northwards, one finds oneself on that ill-defined sea of land which continues the flats of North Germany on the one side and stretches into Asia on the other, with only the interruption of the Urals between. The absence of natural strongholds in that vast indefinite level, and perhaps also the absence of an insufficient supply of stone, most of all the absence of natural frontiers, has affected the whole story. That is why it is so astonishing that this individual Polish nation, which is also a bastion of Christendom against Asia, should have arisen and consolidated itself between Cracow and the Baltic Sea.

Of that nation I have called the Lady Church of Cracow and the Wavel Castle the origins from which it springs. But there is another nucleus, the famous shrine of Czenstohowa.

It is characteristic of our ignorance, here, in the West, of all things Polish that the monastery, the spire, the altar of Czenstohowa should be hardly known to us. It was the turning point of the invasions. It was here that the last of the Swedish effort turned back. That was symbolic, and symbolic also was the advent by Foch after the Great War had been fought out and Poland had risen from the dead. *He* knew all that was meant by Czenstohowa. He came there all the way after the peace to pay homage: to give thanks.

But already his victory was being sapped and ruined.

There in the night one may hear in seasons of pilgrimage great crowds of the peasantry chanting all through the vigil, from sunset to dawn, awaiting the Mass at morning, as they camp out on the slight slopes of that rising mound.

For that famous hill is hardly a hill. It is but a wave, an isolated roll of land in the midst of the flatness.

Czenstohowa and the Lady Church of Cracow between them are the spiritual pillars of the State. Czenstohowa has survived the floods of invasion after invasion, the ebb and flow of the armies right up to yesterday. It remains as certain of continuance as the unseen forces which inspired it from the beginning and raised its walls and towers.

Here again I could wish that the Poles transliterated so famous a name in order that we of the West could read it the more easily. As it is spelt for us we read it ill or not at all. Yet the pronunciation is simple enough. Transliterated it runs 'Chenstohova,' and there is no difficulty in pronouncing that. But the native spelling cuts it off from us. So much for Czenstohowa. I could hope that the shrine retains the memory of one pilgrim, even dimly, as strongly as that pilgrim retains the scene of Czenstohowa.

I wonder how many of those few Englishmen

C R A C O W

who go into Poland and feel something of the Polish story have so much as seen Czenstohowa? It remains unspoken of in our letters. It was not even revealed to us when the attempt at framing a new Europe was made—and ruined by London and the Banks—after the victory of 1918. Czenstohowa has not even been subject to the general abuse which has fallen on most things Polish from the enemies of the Christian thing. Czenstohowa is not deliberately ignored. It is simply unknown, unrepeated in the Western tongue.

If the Partition was symbolised by the division of the Vistula into three parts—Cracow under the mountains going to Austria, Warsaw and the mid-course of the river to Prussia, its seizure by Prussia is stamped upon the fate of Torun, for which the Western, German name is Thorn.

Thorn also I have known both in the past when it was in the hands of its Prussian gaolers and now since its liberation.

When Prussia held it it was singularly spared from the common fate of whatever Prussia mishandled.

With Poznan it was otherwise. Potsdam under its German name of Posen was badly mauled by the putting up, to overshadow it and to vulgarise it, of an appalling modern castle, all howling of Berlin, which I think still stands. But, after all, Posen is some way to the west. It has an

appreciable element of German people within it (12 per cent. I think I was told); and those Germans, like the English in the Irish towns, represent more than their mere numbers, for they have a large part of the commerce in their hands and of the administration. But Thorn was, for some reason, left alone. The invader had not done much more to it than put up German names at the street corners and these are now gone. The only essentially Prussian thing in the place that I can recollect is the bridge, to which is attached a railway station in the same manner. Both of them are what one might expect. But the town itself, and especially the heart of the town, has been preserved.

The name of glory in Thorn is, of course, the name Copernicus, and there you may see his statue and that excellent Latin inscription : '*He moved the earth and made the sun stand still.*'

If you would judge how human moods change, consider the fierce debate upon Copernicus. One party will have him a German, another party will have him a Pole—and the latter have the better case. Copernicus himself and the men of his day were alien to such violent emotions. They were occupied in much greater things—the assault upon and the defence of that intelligent faith whereby the culture of Poland had been formed and established and by which it still lives. Nor did they think the discovery, or the guess, of the



THORN FROM THE VISTULA

To face page 164

heliocentric thesis to be an all-important thing. To-day men talk as though it caused a revolution in the human mind. It did nothing of the sort. That revolution did not proceed from discovery. Discovery proceeded from *it*. You may hear fools say that Copernicus destroyed the old grandeur of this earth, our mortal habitation ; that since his time it has been impossible to think of the earth as being all important as it was to our fathers, and so on, and so forth, in the extreme of rubbish. As though the earth had ceased to be the nourisher and progenitor of our human kind ! As though man were not of this world ! As though things beyond it were not foreign to him ! As though it were not our only, though transitory, home !

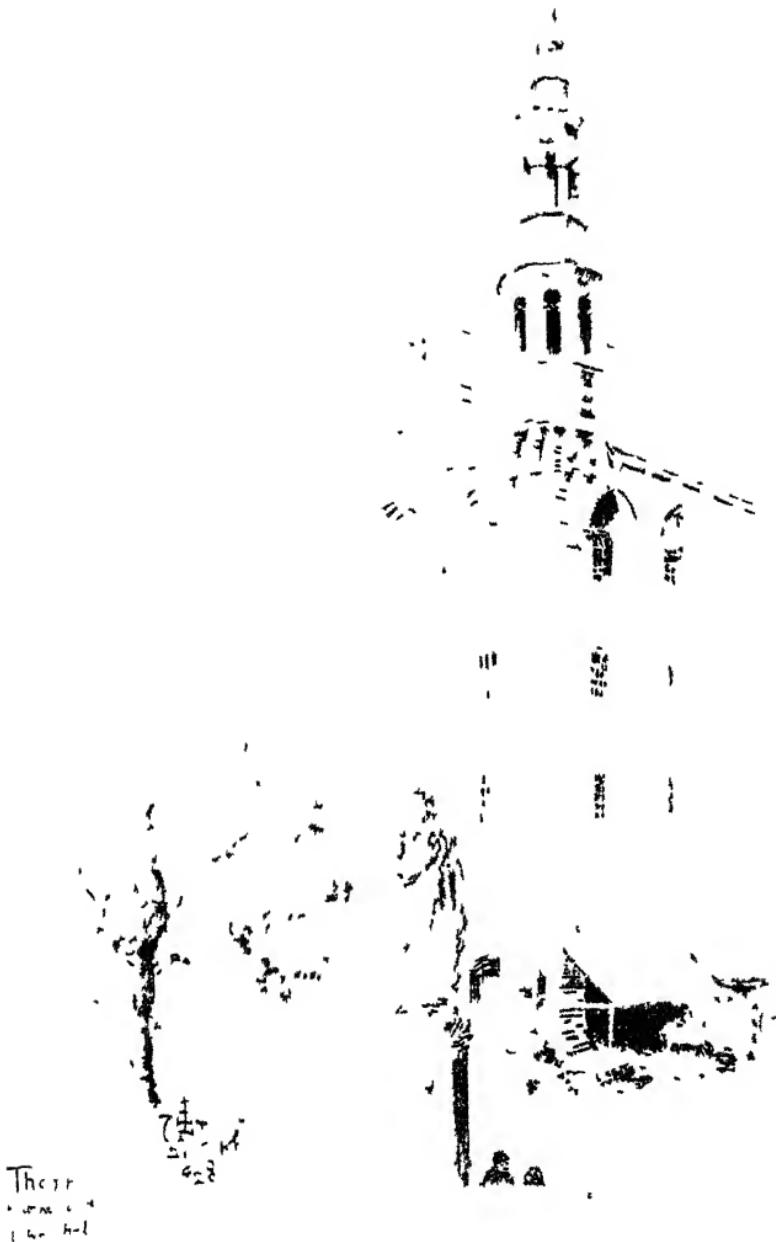
That certainly the round world is and that it remains. Those who call the globe which we inhabit a mere speck in the universe, a negligible thing, would do well to go about it on foot—as I have done. I have not gone all round it (I am sorry to say), but I have walked in the Middle West, over the Rockies, and on the Pacific, mile after mile and day after day, and I have walked from Toulouse to the sources of the Tagus and from the Pyrenees to St. James's of Compostella, and sundry other walks have I taken, and I can tell you that to the man who walks, or even rides (though not to the man who goes by train, and still less to the man in the motor, and least of all

to the man who flies), the earth is not only real, but very large indeed. It is man who becomes a speck on the earth, not the world ; and yet he knows that immortal speck to be more important, not only than the globe, but than all the rest of the material universe around. Now this conviction also comes by walking, for in walking a man's thoughts deal with profound things.

The Vistula at Torun is broadening somewhat, but remains itself as indeed it does to the end, to the very Delta and the approach to the sea. There is about that great stream something of an American quality, though it has banks more defined than those of the great American rivers, yet as one goes down it in one of the river steamers (built, as are the American river steamers, for dealing with continual shoals) one feels as one does on the American rivers ; the Vistula is a personality building up a whole countryside.

The navigation in my experience is amusing. Among other things you will find that when the steamer touches at a point to land passengers and goods, it does literally 'touch' the bank of any wharf along which it lies. It gently rams its nose into the shelving shore, lies there till its task is accomplished, then tugs out again under reversed engines, swinging round to the stream, and pursues its way.

There is another amusing feature about the



COPERNICUS

To face page 166

Vistula banks, and that is the very neat little German villages and their contrast with the Polish settlements in the midst of which they stand. This contrast would, I am sure, to many a modern Western observer be all in favour of the intruders, the colonising little German groups. For, as I have said, they have neatness ; we admire that which is like ourselves, and our admiration is the greater in proportion to our ignorance of men. There is no harm done. Neatness and flower-boxes never yet won a battle, nor did tightness of uniform, nor the goose step, nor loud cries of SHALLOO-HUMP ! on parade. It is true that great strictness and steadiness of attitude are with some peoples a moral support to soldiering, and are therefore indirectly useful in war. But then, for other peoples, so far from being a moral support they are a nuisance and therefore a weakness.

I remember the remarks of two men belonging to two very different and opposing nations. One of them said of a regiment of the other on the march that it was like a straggling mob, or a lot of school boys out for a walk. The other said, with a shrug, of the regiment on the opposing side that it was like a *corps de ballet*.

Many a beautifully cleaned and polished gun has been lost and many a gun caked with mud outside and drawn by harness tied up with string has helped to win great battles.

There is a sentence in a modern book which I love to quote and perhaps quote too often. It was written of one of the principal commanders of the Great War and of his attitude towards the forces of a great ally. It ran like this : ‘ He was a man of his own time and place and could not understand that a paunchy little fellow in *pince-nez* and ill shaven might be a better strategist than himself, and even a better leader of men.’

And here I am reminded of those very necessary men called pilots. In most parts of the world the pilot prides himself on being utterly unlike the stage sailor. He wears shabby civilian clothes and a little bowler hat. Yet it is he who knows every yard of the tortuous channel and the twisting of the tides and it is he who has undisputed command of the perilous passages that lead to safety.

Let no one despise ornament even in soldiering, even on the sea, but let no one mistake ornament for the substantive thing adorned. ‘ Dress them how you will,’ said one advising the Neapolitan Bourbon in the famous story, ‘ dress them how you choose ; they will always run away.’ But it does not follow that the carefully dressed and groomed are not good soldiers. They are commonly the best of soldiers. And so much for that.

Thorn, I say, had not been, when I last saw it under its Prussian masters, too much vulgarised.

It had been spared from a sort of negligence and contempt.

But with Warsaw it was otherwise. When the Russians held Warsaw they put up in the main square of the town an enormous, brand-new orthodox church swearing violently with the architecture all around. A thing which might have come straight out of Moscow, or out of some giant's toy shop. It stood there in the main square of Warsaw, almost filling it up, as my dim memory goes after all these years, crowding it out, as it were—a bully, forcing the people of the place out of its way and crying aloud that it was Moscow and meant to remind us. It has gone.

Nothing was more startling, when I came to see Warsaw again after all those years, than the disappearance of this huge thing. The Poles have pulled it down and (to use the archaic and hieratic English so dear to many moderns) 'there was not left of it a stone upon a stone.'

I think this negative experience is the strongest memory I have of Warsaw then and now; Warsaw as it was in 1912 and Warsaw revisited.

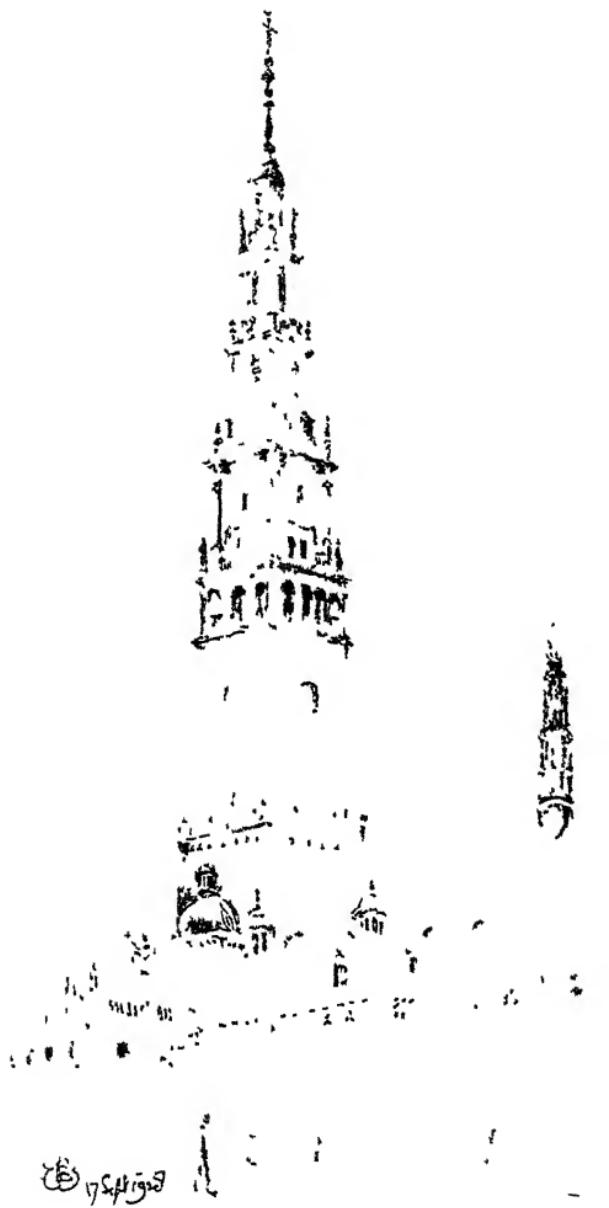
In another corner of Europe, and a more modest one, there has also been a destruction on a much lesser scale: on the bank of the Boyne River.

The Boyne River has seen many things. Among other things it has seen hurled into its waters by

the Black and Tans a Non-conformist clergyman whom the Black and Tans mistook (by his collar) for a local priest. The Boyne has seen the crossing of Dutch William's army under its officers and its hotch-potch regulars of Hollanders, Germans, Huguenots and the rest. It saw old Schomberg fall, shot from behind apparently by his own troops. It saw an army overwhelmingly superior, nearly twice as numerous in men, infinitely better trained and with four-fold the artillery of its opponents, fail to get a decision in spite of such a crushing superiority.

The Boyne, having thus been a thorough blunder, at once became the symbol of complete victory. To commemorate that victory there was a monument upon the northern shore, and when I went over that ground to write upon the battle I remember marking this monument which was, if my memory serves me right, a sort of obelisk; but later men came in the night and blew it up.

They had better have left it where it was for it had no offensive power and it marked a site. They have not, I am glad to say, destroyed the monument at Austerlitz. At least they had not destroyed it when I was last there. But they have got rid of the name. I had hired a car in the town called by the euphonious name of Brn and I asked the man to drive me to the field of Austerlitz, which is only a few miles away. He



Jasna Góra

Jasna Góra
czelochowa

CZENSTOHOWA.

To face page 170.

assured me vigorously that there was no such place. I was bewildered. I knew the campaign pretty well and the details of the battle, and I was familiar, as are, I believe, many others, with the name of Austerlitz. Indeed, I can tell you of a house in Oxford which was called Austerlitz by those whose sympathies lay with the victorious side, whereupon their neighbours, whose sympathies lay elsewhere, called their house 'Sedan.'

Well, when I asked the motor driver to take me to Austerlitz and when I had heard there was no such place I went back and bought the most modern map I could get in the town, and sure enough the name Austerlitz had disappeared. In its place was printed in bold letters the name 'Slavka.'

Will it ever be the same with Waterloo I wonder! Outrageous people have done something of the same sort to Hastings—not the town but the battlefield. The *Odericus Vitalis* talked of it a century after as 'Senlac.' No one else did. The people who fought there and their sons and great grandsons all called it the Battle of Hastings, but Lingard finding this in *Odericus Vitalis* adopted it for the sake of learning. Then old Freeman came along and did a characteristic thing. He pinched Senlac (without acknowledgment) from Lingard. It is a point of honour at Oxford never to mention Lingard's work although it is the foundation of all they know

in the way of our home history (such as it is). Freeman, I say, pinched 'Senlac' and proudly raised it to its modern eminence, and to-day there are thousands who go about calling the Battle of Hastings the battle of Senlac as a proof of their enormous learning. However, as I said, Waterloo still stands. The French name for it was Mont St. Jean, but I am told that in Germany it is still called *La Belle Alliance*.

The Battle of the Muscowa has been re-baptised Borodino, which was always the native name, and that change has stuck. But one battle will, I think, always keep its name, for there is no other name for it, and that is the Battle of Warsaw which saved the western world. The invading army had everything its own way until within a march of the city when the counter-stroke threw it back and saved Europe from what would have been Communism, for the Germans of those days, in the great cities at least, were ripe for the change. The German dockers of Dantzig had refused to unload ammunition which had arrived for the service of the Polish army.

As Sobieski, throwing back the Mahomedans from Vienna, so Pilsudski throwing back that rush which so singularly resembled the Mohammedan invasion of Syria, saved for a second time the culture of the Occident: each of them were Poles.

Pilsudski saved not only Europe but Warsaw, and to Warsaw my mind returns before leaving Baltic things.

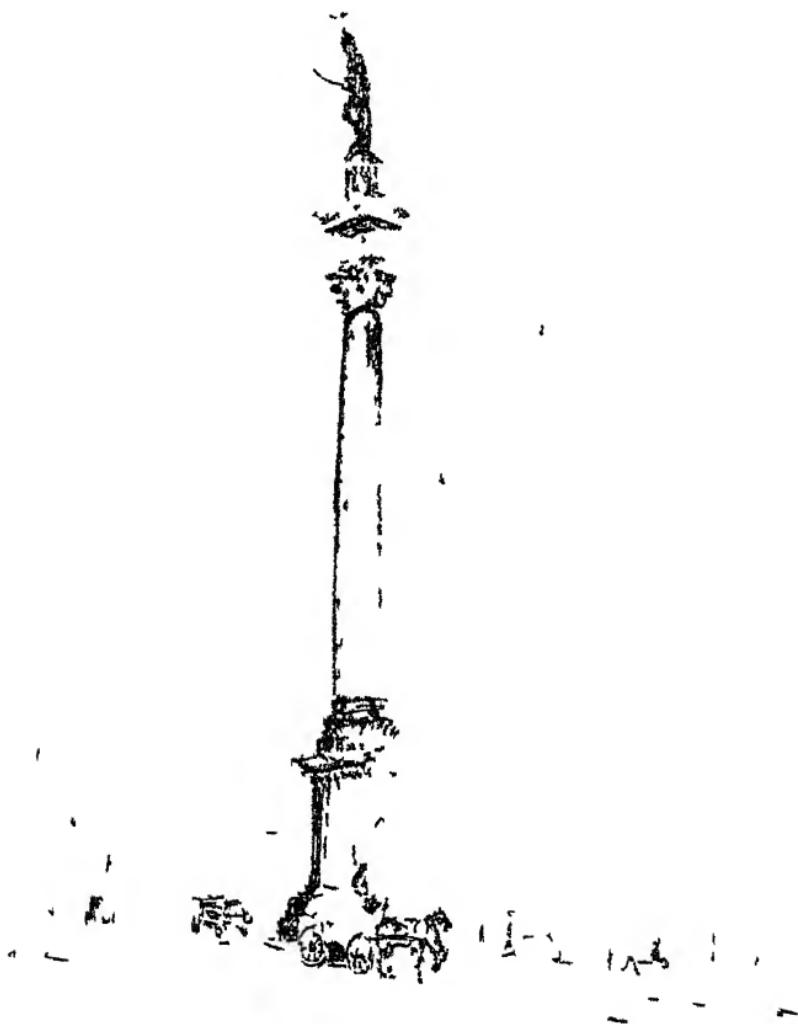
Warsaw suffers, as does Madrid, from the artificiality of its origin, or rather of its origin as a national capital and seat of the government, for Warsaw was made the capital by a decision of some three and a half centuries ago, or a little more, just as Madrid was made the capital of Spain at the same time. The making of Madrid the capital of Spain was certainly a blunder : they wanted elbow room and there was no elbow room in Toledo, but Madrid is too close to Toledo ; the national tradition centres in Toledo and not in Madrid. Madrid could never show one of those great mediæval cathedrals which are the chief among the innumerable glories of Spain ; there were no ballads attaching to Madrid ; there was no Christ of the Light in Madrid. It is fitting that during the present war the chief act of heroism should have been performed at the Alcazar of Toledo. Madrid means for those who follow the Spanish Civil War little more than the failure of an attack upon a modern great town, the difficulty of fighting in a modern great town, the agglomeration of proletarians and therefore of revolutionaries in a modern great town. Its fate does not move the foreigner as though it were the fate of Spain itself, whereas the relief of the Alcazar of Toledo moved all

Christian Europe like a trumpet. One might almost say it was worth the while of the Spanish patriots to delay those few days for the relief of the Alcazar, for though it lost them Madrid it gave them a certain spiritual asset which they will not lose.

§

Warsaw had at least a good reason for becoming the capital because it was central to that vast extent of flat land over which the nominal boundaries of the Poles fluctuate so enormously : so that one never knows whether to say that Poland by rights should extend to this or to that boundary upon east or west. But wherever you put the boundaries, Warsaw would always have something central about it.

Also Warsaw stands upon that central river, the Vistula, round which Poland is built up, and by the way, nowhere more than at Warsaw does that river give the aspect of one of the great American rivers to which I have already compared it. The great modern mechanical bridges, as well as the rise and fall in the level of the stream, and the rough banks and the straggling buildings upon them, all give that impression. It would, I suppose, be impossible to give Warsaw a regular alignment of quays on either side ; the fluctuations of the level are too great, and the



Warsaw (E)

WARSAW SIGISMUND VASA THE CROSS AND THE SWORD

To face page 174

expense would be very heavy indeed, but the effect would be noble.

Warsaw carries a strong tradition of the past, much stronger than does that other late-chosen capital Madrid. There is a deep impress of the eighteenth century and its graciousness upon the town of Warsaw. The Palace and the churches recall upon either side the chief function of Poland, which has been the maintenance of an outpost: the outpost of our Western culture and civilisation beyond the Germanies and against Asia.

When Pilsudski won his famous battle he did more than save the city called by its name (the Battle of Warsaw). He saved, as I have said, everything east of the Rhine. It looks as though the Germans may not have been saved for a much better fate. It looks as though another barbarism, almost as bad as the modern barbarism of Moscow, were to take the place of the German culture, for that culture shrieked when Vienna fell.

But one must leave all that to time. There is something so mechanical and fulsome about all this violent experiment led by the clique in Berlin calling themselves National Socialist that it is clearly incapable of endurance. What the modification will be we cannot tell, but modification there must be, and that soon and widespread. The Germans have about them many qualities,

few evil, most of them good. They are a people of affectionate hearts, and for the most part of delightful manners in conduct with their fellow beings and with foreigners. They have the happiness to be sentimental, and they have interesting architectural imagination, which has produced beauty in the past when it was allied with a rational philosophy. It is producing monstrosities to-day when it is allied to the opposite thereof: for the hideousness of modern building is nowhere so hideous as among the Germans.

They are masters of a kind of formless music which appeals particularly to modern men, and they have also a much older popular music which is universal among them and is most pleasing. They are imperturbably patient, and this virtue in them has had great effect upon their physical science and has enabled them to accomplish prodigies of research in history—though when it comes to putting the items of their research together into rational form they are never very successful and often absurd. The stuff that is called the Higher Criticism came from them; we are already losing it and we are losing it without regret. Their reading of the past when it is not mere empty vainglory is all out of gear. They put things in the wrong order and leave out the essentials.

Their defects they owe always to the same

radical defect; they are immature. It is this which gives them the charm and also the exasperating quality of children. Thus they are not cruel but they have blind fits of rage and they get specially angry with people who are too much for them. They have no chance intellectually against the Jew, and their 'reaction' as the Americans call it is therefore to lash out at the Jew; and, like children, they must always be holding somebody's hand and be guided and led about. I have heard a man who knows them well and intimately through long residence among them, and with a good acquaintance of them and their idioms, compare them to putty. Anyone who gets hold of them can mould them as he wills. That was the chance of the Prussian military caste; when they broke down it was the chance of the Jew; now it is the chance of a little clique, not very sane and wholly ignorant, who rely upon the natural tribal patriotism of the millions for the moment in their hands.

So far as this little booklet of random notes is concerned the present interest of the Germans is their present command of the Baltic. Prussia has inherited the shores of that sea, the conquests of Sweden. What Sweden did to make the Baltic a Swedish lake we know. The military genius of Sweden succeeded in that aim, it succeeded in reaching that goal. Then came the rise of

Prussia and the gradual absorption of the southern Baltic shore by Berlin.

There was a moment when that work in its turn was undone. Prussia and the huge coalition which she had got together when she launched war in 1914 was defeated by another less powerful but more enduring coalition, one enjoying the high advantages of the West. Prussia in 1914 when she demanded French fortresses contemptuously by ultimatum and struck out into a venture against the Russians had everything in her favour. The only properly equipped army on the other side when she began was the French. It was the only conscript army comparable in quality to her own, but the French were not only hopelessly outnumbered but also went into the war blindfold through the destruction of their Intelligence Department during and after the Dreyfus Affair. The weight of England could only tell after two years, Russia had no adequate material equipment for her vast man power and no communications corresponding to them. The chances were three to one for Berlin against the West, and nothing but their own blunderings broke down the plans of the Prussian General Staff.

I repeat the truth that it would have been possible to have restored peace and security to the Baltic by making Dantzig once more the port of the Poles, leaving Polish influence free to

GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS

colonise and transform that city, giving to Poland a large seaboard, cutting off East Prussia and leaving that province to wither. That solution was advised by the experts who understood their business ; it was turned down by the ignorant politicians sent from England and the United States who had for the Poles an antipathy almost as strong as their lack of European knowledge was profound and wide.

Since it was taken for granted that the new Poland could not live, the international banking system, of which the chief exponent was the Bank of England, put all their money on Berlin. The English politicians, but still more the English banking power, restored Prussia, and that is why Prussia is not only leading and organises all the German millions, but unhappily dominates the Baltic to-day.

§

When one goes back again to Sweden from the southern Baltic shore, when one returns from Poland, risen from the dead, to Sweden, still enduring, it is over a sea which has become once more a Prussian sea. The more relief is it to find oneself back again in the peace and the equitable life of Scandinavia ; and when one so finds oneself among the Swedes again, the mind returns to their great soldier. When one is

writing of the struggle between him and the Poles—knowing that the Poles were the champions of Europe, Gustavus the champion of anti-Europe—there is little sympathy to waste upon him; but time having gone over all that and left him a figure of another sort with a romance and value of its own, cannot but remember him with sympathy. For the danger of Europe to-day is of another kind, infinitely worse and on a far greater scale.

I regret that there is not a great statue standing out somewhere upon the promontory of the Baltic, a statue on a heroic scale to represent Gustavus Adolphus—the soldier.

There ought to be one to that Vasa standing opposite to that other Vasa, his cousin Sigismund who blesses and defends the Polish country from his tall column in the market place of Warsaw. They could reply one to another, those two statues, and I hope that some day the Swedes will put one up to their immortal captain. He did every kind of harm. He busied himself with destroying, as much as he could, the unity of Christendom. He ruined the tradition of Germany, supporting that mortal rebellion of the Germans against the Empire which left them worn out, bleeding and half dead for the better part of a hundred years. But he was so great a soldier that I cannot abandon his name.

Men are divided into those who love soldiers

GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS

and those who hate them, for whereas there are many men who will forgive in a soldier almost anything so that he be a soldier and who are moved by the story of soldiering as by a triumphal music, so there are many to whom the man serving under arms is repulsive. As the poet sang of his opponent :

‘ He doesn’t mind the Moscow crew who stink in stolen furs
But cannot bear the people who wear little gilded spurs.
For though he scribbles with a will, the man is such a cad
That soldiers always make him ill and Guardsmen drive him mad.’

Yes, there are people who go off the deep end when they approach the very name of Alexander, of Caesar or of Napoleon, let alone the lesser captains. Why it is so I know not. For my part I could forgive a man anything when I hear or read of him that he has done well in battle and if he has spent his life with soldiers. They are very jolly in peace as well, though garrison duty is enough to break any man’s heart.

Whenever they put up that statue to Gustavus Adolphus on that promontory or one facing the Baltic Sea (let them make it at least 30 feet high and better 50 feet high or 100 feet high—like the statue of the crusading pope which is stuck on the top of a great hill overlooking the Marne—

and there is another of another pope, if I remember right, on the big Burgundian hill near Dijon). Well, whenever they put up that kolossal to Gustavus Adolphus may I be alive to hear of it if not to see.

Of course it is good fortune makes the great general, not only his talents but the opportunity for using those talents. But then, luck rules all, and it is no more against the glory of a soldier that he depends on fortune than it is against the glory of a poet, for the poet also depends on luck as all men do. Gustavus selling himself to Richelieu, doing his best to kill the Faith in Germany, villain, usurper, looter, anything you like, was still the maker of the modern army. He it was who first began to understand guns. He is spiritually the ancestor of Bonaparte in this, and in that brilliant twelve months of victory at the end of which he fell (his body stripped naked on the battlefield), he crowded all that a man can crowd of glory.

We have men to-day who have done original things with new weapons but have not got the name they deserve. One such man comes to my mind, an Englishman who was within an ace of ending the Great War himself by his own talent, inventing a new tactic with tanks. He also ought to have his statue when statues are handed round.

Butler in *Erewhon* made the excellent suggestion

that no statue should be put up to anyone until he was dead so many years, and that even when the statue had been put up it was to be destroyed if, after another period of years, men, by a vote taken, no longer approved of it. As a political scheme there is a great deal to be said for this, yet it would be bad for history and therefore for mankind. The iconoclasts have always done harm, but nothing to the harm of those who wantonly destroyed the marble coffins of antiquity, of those who ruined the great tomb of the Chaise Dieu in the central mountains and the tomb of William the Conqueror in Caen during the Huguenot wars.

What is it in man which makes him thus a destroyer of his own creation? The French are the chief culprits, but there are plenty of examples elsewhere. And by the way, let anyone who sculpts or models or paints, while he is taking a pride in his achievement, standing back and looking at it and saying, 'This will remain for ever,' let every artist in that mood tell himself that as like as not his grandchild or his great grandchild will come along with a hammer and knock it to pieces, or with a torch and burn it. When men are disgruntled, or when they are in the exactly opposite mood of exaltation, they seem moved to destroy, and what a pity! But even destruction in anger and enthusiasm is not so bad as pedantic destruction, the cold-blooded

handmaid of outrageous vanity and ignorance.

There is one kind of destruction which stands between the two and is perhaps inevitable, the destruction which comes from change in taste. When some art of the past becomes meaningless to the remote descendants of those who set up its masterpieces and when those descendants therefore pull down what their fathers did, get rid of it for rubbish and replace it by some perhaps worthy thing of their own, there is taking place a process which is unavoidable but none the less to be regretted. What would I not give for the woodwork of the choir in Notre Dame of Paris, the Misericordes and the carven stalls, the dark oak which must have been so admirably married to the great ogives ! It was carted away as rubbish and the Great King put in its place that formal seventeenth-century woodwork which you look upon to-day. Where did it go ? Who bought up the fragments ? Were they used as firewood, or what ? At any rate they have gone, and it is a thing to shed tears over.

There is here a duty imposed, I think, a special duty, upon all governments. Moulds should be taken of pretty well every figure subject remaining to us from the past and these should be stored up, or even exhibited, so that men can tell how their ancestors lived and how they looked and how their minds worked.

GOTHENBURG

Two such stores have disappeared in the last few years in both of which I took great pleasure. One was in the Architectural Museum, a dingy, dark room in Great Smith Street, Westminster. The other was in the fine long gallery of the Trocadero. From this last one could copy any one of a thousand mediæval figures. I hope they have been preserved. Anyhow, it is certainly the duty of the state to keep a living record of all such things, for some of them are lost or destroyed or mutilated with every year that passes.

§

And so good-bye to Gustavus and to the Baltic world.

§

I was to leave Scandinavia by Gothenburg. The port stands at the mouth of that river which drains the great upland lake of Wenner. Its last reaches broaden as the salt water is approached, though it still remains a not very wide inland stream, running through flat country between the hills and the shore.

On my approach to the port the summer evening was fading, excellently placid, in a dust of gold, and the sun to the west, within two hours of its late northern setting, stood benignant,

shedding a quiet influence over all. The whole thing made a worthy exit for this, my return to the Baltic.

§

As one goes down the last reaches of that river, now in repose after its rapid fall from the highlands, one passes on the right the last of those very few great fortifications which Scandinavia can boast. It is a large ruined castle on a low but abrupt hill near the right bank of the stream where a subsidiary valley comes in, and it had been built, I suppose, to guard the two issues : that up the river of Gothenburg itself (the Gota) and that running north and east up country. It does not seem to have been planned by the ruling power, but rather by some local great owner of land and serfs, and administration who took toll there, but indeed of its history I know nothing. It will remain in my mind always from the way it stands a sort of sentinel, so exceptionally strong in that country where walls and castles are so rare. Then, below it, the stream slips down to meet the sea.

As I approached Gothenburg and could see the steamer masts far off at the quays, I could not but remember that motto which I first read in Maurice Baring's book on Mary Queen of Scots : her own motto : ' My end is my beginning.'

For it was by Gothenburg that I had entered

GOTHENBURG

Scandinavia all those many years ago in my youth, and at Elsinore that I first said good-bye to Scandinavia on my way back home over the North Sea. Now at the end of forty-three years it was the other way about. I had started at Elsinore, I was ending at Gothenburg, and I would see Gothenburg, I suppose, for the last time—but one never knows. Very vividly does that fresh arrival, that first experience of a foreign country, stand in my mind with a lifetime in between.

Men were talking in England during those days of a system of licensing called the 'Gothenburg' system; and as my companion and I were young and everything was for us a jest, there was no better jest to occupy us than the Gothenburg system. I do not know what the system was, save that it was one of the innumerable tricks for interfering with men's getting something to drink. In those days such tricks seemed to me mere foolery. They are always oppressive, always unjust and the morals at the back of them are offensive, for they take it for granted that man has not the self-control to use the gifts of nature and of art; but I know now how menacing the danger is, and no doubt they were half right. No doubt they are half right to-day in trying to meet that danger by the artificial restrictions which are worse in Sweden than in Denmark over the water.

Anyhow, the Gothenburg system as we found it was a great surprise, for we young men on leaving the steamer and having about us the air of this foreign town, went into the first hotel of any consequence where we thought we could refresh ourselves from the strain of the sea journey. There did we make acquaintance for the first time of that admirable institution, the Smärgas, which all over the Baltic feeds men and almost takes the place of meals: that immensely exaggerated, that enormous *hors d'œuvres* business where a man may eat more than his fill of little fishes and dried and smoked flesh and onions and radishes and meat paste and I don't know what-and-all.

But though the Smärgas delighted us indeed and was a discovery worth coming all those miles over the waves (and suffering the beastliness of the boat in those parts of it devoted to the poor, with whom we travelled), it was not the greatest surprise. The greatest surprise was a lot of little taps set in the wall of the dining room, standing above the sideboard on which the admirable Smärgas stood. These little taps were labelled by all sorts of names, names of strong waters, Schnapps and Brandy and Curaçoa and the whole regiment of them. People went up, each with his little glass, turned on the tap and filled the little glass, drank a bit and went back to their Smärgas, and after five or six minutes of the Smärgas

filled the little glass again at another tap, sampling the liquors in turn.

‘This,’ said I to my companion of those days, ‘is apparently the Gothenburg system’; and when we got back to Oxford we never took a liqueur at the end of a meal without calling our action by that sacred name, the Gothenburg system. Thus was the memory of the town imprinted upon my mind. I am told that to-day these ancient habits have disappeared. At any rate, I saw nothing of it in Gothenburg, for when I got there I went straight from the quay into the steamer that was to take me to England.

In that first coming upon Scandinavia I had travelled through the night up country and made a vocabulary for myself in a new and unknown fashion. I did it with the aid of a local schoolmaster who was also attached in some way to the railway station where I had to stop in the middle of the night. He knew Latin. I would write down in Latin the name of something, such as *panis* for bread, *vinum* for wine, and he would write the Swedish name opposite it. It is a good way of finding one’s way about Europe, and I have used it often enough.

I remember once in Linz on the Danube getting such a vocabulary from a priest, being myself as hopeless at German as at any other foreign tongue. I recommend the method to all

those who have any Latin. As for those who have none, they may drown themselves.

The composite schoolmaster and railway man wrote down at the end of this vocabulary the Swedish word for a person of noble birth, which is much the same as the German name. He wrote down the word *Adel*. Having done this he took out a visiting card on which was his name and that of his wife. After his wife's name was the description *née* von So-and-so. He pointed this out to me with pride and repeated 'Adel—*nobilis*.'

I like this simplicity. It argues great virtue, just as the opposite habit of concealing rank argues an odious exaggeration of its value. It is a good thing, is all this human cobweb of ranks and titles, for it binds history together, it attaches the sons to the fathers and, what is more important, it gives diversity, it is picturesque. But it is an absurd thing to worship. However, man must worship something.

On that same initial entry into Scandinavia I had seen under the moonlight for the first time the Great Lakes. This also I never forgot. Gothenburg, I was told in a book which I picked up on board, was founded by Gustavus Vasa. If that is true it is a feather in the cap of this outrageous buccaneer. He spotted the right place, free from the toll and narrows of the Sound, emancipated from the threat of Elsinore and its guns, and I read in the same book that it

GOTHENBURG

was through Gothenburg that the English supplies were sent during the Napoleonic Wars, to Sweden and so across the Baltic to Russia, thereby turning the flank of Napoleon's blockade. Not that England's evasion of the continental blockade had the importance which our history books give it from a national and most excusable bias. It was not the trickle of English trade that defeated the Emperor, it was the fatal expedition into Russia, the grave of his cavalry and the mortal wounding of his vast armies.

§

So went we down that river to the gates of the sea and here, if you will excuse me, I must indulge in an orgy of commonplace. I am going to compare the last reaches of a river and its meeting with the sea to the ending of human life.

Oh commonplace ! Bed of repose for the jaded mind of the wretched scribbler ! Stock in trade of all politicians ! Solid foundation for every kind of pronouncement and guaranteeing not only the writers and speakers, but the whole movement of the human mind permanent and comfortable repose ! I am not ashamed to make of commonplace my meat and drink, my human food, and I am quite certain it is even better for the reader than for the writer. For when the reader comes upon a Commonplace he leaps up to meet it, welcoming a friend familiar to him

RETURN TO THE BALTIC

through his whole life. He says to himself, ' Ah ! Now I know where I am ! '

So with this commonplace of the last reaches of the river and the last years of sentient mortality before we come to that sea wherein some say that the spirit of man is absorbed and lost, but others more wisely advance that it travels in a novel fashion to new places. Anyhow, no one can deny that this parallel between the river as it meets the sea, even the River Gota at Gothenburg, and the salutation to Death is a Commonplace, and very glad I am to have set it down here.

§

The sun set as we sailed out into the Cattegat, which is also called the Belt, or, as I said earlier, the Sleeve.

It was calm weather and we caught at last the winking light upon the Danish coast beyond, and so off into the North Sea, of which the poet sings :

' The moving mind that God gave me
Is manifold as the wide North Sea,
And as the sea is full of things
The great fish in their wanderings
And the spread gallies of the old kings
And darkness eddying round in rings,
So, packed with all that I have done
And felt and known and lost and won,
By the tide drifted and the wind inclined
Moves my not measurable mind.'

In the North Sea my return to the Baltic ended.

Printed in Great Britain by
THE WHITEFRIARS PRESS LTD.,
LONDON AND TONBRIDGE.

AIDE-de-CAMP'S LIBRARY

Accn. No.... 591.....

1. Books may be retained for a period not exceeding fifteen days.